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APRIL 2010

The American Conservative

Tea Totalers

How the GOP crashed the party



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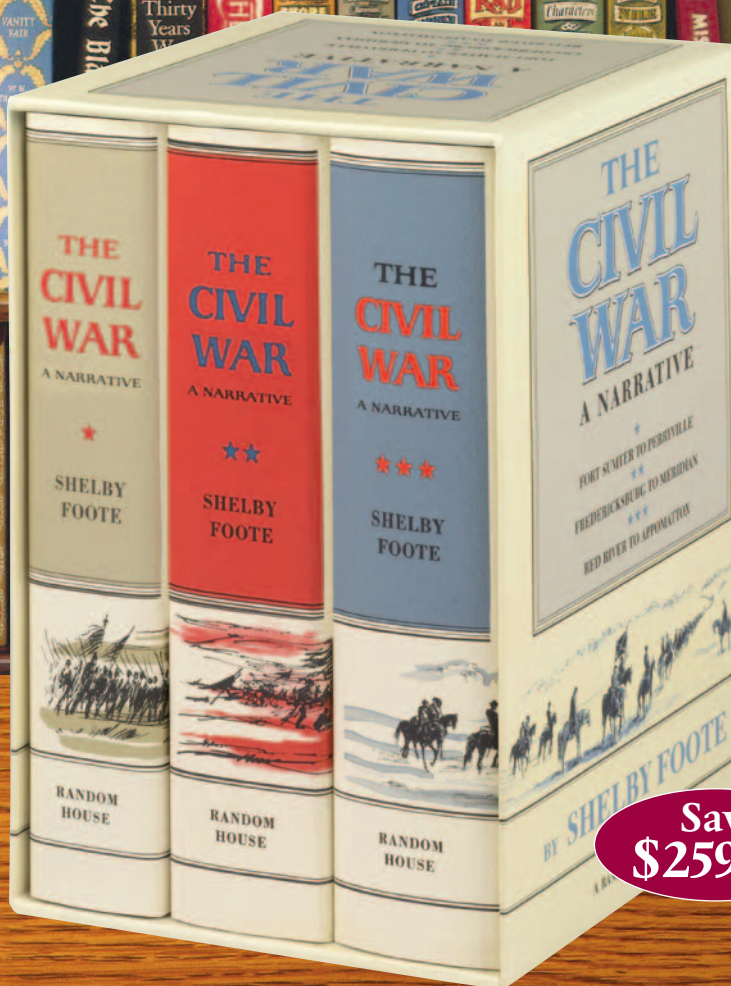
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[ECONOMY]

THE DEBT DRAIN

In December 1862, after the bloody battle at Fredericksburg, President Lincoln told one of his advisers, "No general yet found can face the arithmetic, but the end of the war will be at hand when he shall be discovered." By establishing his Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform to address our exploding debt, is President Obama finally facing some arithmetic of his own? Don't bet on it.

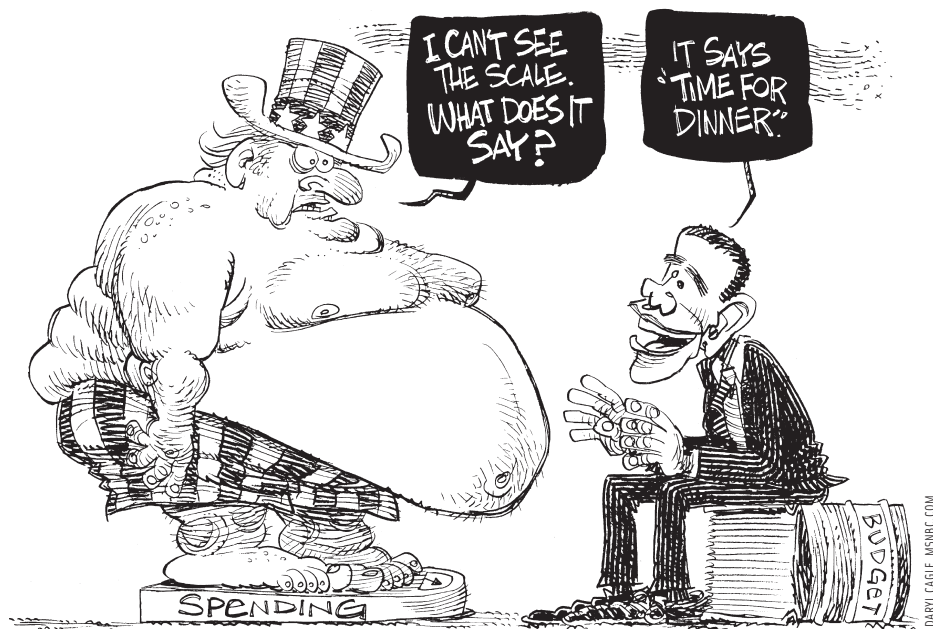
He claims, "It keeps me awake at night, looking at all that red ink." Forgive our cynicism, but we have greater faith in gossip-column reports that he spends his evenings watching "Sports-Center."

Not surprisingly, Obama rushes to blame his profligate predecessor, but he can scarcely plead thrift. We are \$1.6 trillion more in debt than when he took office, pushing the fearsome tally well past \$12 trillion—more than the economies of China and Britain combined.

U.S. Comptroller General David Walker predicts that within 12 years, interest alone will be the largest item in the federal budget—"payments for which we get nothing."

Still, our politicians keep delivering something: handouts for the blue states, tax cuts for the red, pushing back the butcher's bill until after they retire. This is why a commission stocked with aging partisans won't deliver radical reform—as a president committed to bread, circuses, and healthcare for all surely recognizes (and probably hopes). Neither will the American people demand dramatic belt-tightening. Most have long been living beyond their own means, wedging massive flat-screen TVs into homes they never thought they'd have to pay for.

But eventually reality bites. We can't indefinitely live on other people's



money, whether foreigners' or future generations'. Just because no one is willing to face the arithmetic doesn't mean it won't face us.

[CONSERVATISM]

NOTHING TO DECLARE

The most exciting thing about the Mount Vernon Statement, a concatenation of secondhand platitudes served up by the likes of Kathryn Jean Lopez and Ed Meese, was the overreaction it elicited from the FrumForum, which blared the headline, "Conservative Old Guard to Moderates: Drop Dead." But what could even a pro-choice progressive like David Frum find threatening about banalities like "morality is essential to limited government" and "energetic but responsible government is the key to America's safety and correct place in the world"? The closest thing to substance this focus-group slush offers is the declaration that "America's national interest" lies in "advancing freedom and opposing tyranny in the world"—an article of neocon faith that might have come straight out of Frum's *An End to Evil*.

Compare the pasteurized prose of Mount Vernon to its purported model, the 1960 Sharon Statement that launched Young Americans for Freedom. Mount Vernon: "A constitutional conservatism unites all conservatives through the natural fusion provided by American principles." (Note: "natural fusion" means there's no need for effort to achieve syn-

thesis. "American principles"—could anything be more bland?) Sharon: "Foremost among the transcendent values is the individual's use of his God-given free will, whence derives his right to be free from the restrictions of arbitrary force." Mount Vernon: "The conservatism of the Constitution limits government's powers but ensures that government performs its job effectively." Sharon: "The genius of the Constitution—the division of powers—is summed up in the clause that reserves primacy to the several states, or to the people, in those spheres not specifically delegated to the Federal government."

While the Sharon Statement is not scintillating, it says something about the principles of those who signed it: they wanted to be states-righters, and they made an effort to reconcile theism and individualism through natural law. Signatories to the Mount Vernon Statement could believe anything at all—or nothing.

[EDUCATION]

BREATHTAKING IGNORANCE

As Republicans take hope in Tea Parties and President Obama's plummeting popularity, Britain's Conservative Party also looks ahead with eyes full of anticipation. The UK must hold elections by June 3, and to all appearances the Labour Party and Prime Minister Gordon Brown are doomed.

But a Conservative victory might not mean a conservative government, as leading Tories now find their inspiration

from American liberals—Barack Obama in particular. “Our education is the Obama education agenda,” British neocon Michael Gove, the Tory shadow secretary for schools, announced. “I don’t think that President Obama wants anything more in education than to help poor children rise. That is what we want as well.”

That’s a strange notion, but hardly Gove’s strangest. The *Sunday Times* reports, “He is also wooing [Goldie] Hawn, the Buddhist star of ‘Private Benjamin,’ who runs an educational charity that claims simple breathing exercises can boost a child’s ability to absorb knowledge.” Goofy, yes—but maybe no more goofy than No Child Left Behind. Right-leaning politicians in both countries make fools of themselves when they emulate the Left’s goals in education—equality rather than excellence.

[LIBERTIES]

GUILTY GENES

In Steven Spielberg’s film “Minority Report,” the government keeps tabs on its citizens biometrically, with scanners scoping out the eyes of those strolling the streets. Technology is making such paranoid science-fiction closer to fact than fancy. Most parents are too distracted by the birth of their children to notice that the government now forces the collection of the genetic fingerprints of new citizens.

Minnesotan Annie Brown learned this when a doctor revealed that her baby had a gene increasing her risk of cystic fibrosis. It was discovered during government-mandated screening, and the information was also passed along to her insurance company, so little Isabel could have been denied coverage for a condition that can only be described as pre-existing. That’s one reason parents in Minnesota and Texas are suing to stop the feds from taking and keeping DNA specimens.

These samples, which ten states store indefinitely, will almost certainly be used in law enforcement. From California to Colorado, prosecutors are already charging molecules with misdeeds. In Kansas City, when cops had no suspects in a vandalism case, the state indicted DNA on a half-chewed candy left at the scene. It’s a devious way to get around statutes of limitations. But with mandatory DNA collection, one day soon prosecutors will have a massive database of potential matches.

[CULTURE]

SACRIFICE OF FAITH

As we begin Lent, that somber liturgical season in which Christians are called to prayer and penitence, some may be relieved to find that this year’s spiritual burden rests more lightly than usual. Actual fasting is rather unpleasant, so the Archdiocese of Washington has proposed a gentler deprivation: the Lenten Carbon Fast. Available at the Catholic Climate Covenant website, a 40-day plan for the faithful.

Apparently there’s great revelation to be gained by dropping your thermostat one degree or driving the speed limit. Why contemplate The Passion when you can compost? And remember those old injunctions to Lenten almsgiving? So last century. Instead, Day 30’s entry counsels, “Place an insulating cover over your hot water heater.” Modern disciples can further satisfy sacred duty by checking their tire pressure and “learning about mountain-top removal mining.”

For those who follow to the end, the program promises “greater harmony with the Earth and all life.” Notice anything missing from that equation? Like the object of Easter, perhaps? Compared to the glories of weatherstripping, a suffering Savior is kind of a downer. Who needs Him when righteousness is just a recycled canvas bag away? ■

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[elephant in the room]

Tea Party Crashers

While the movement boasts of independence, it is little more than a GOP adjunct: loud, colorful, but still advancing the establishment's ends.

By Michael Brendan Dougherty

JUDY PEPENELLA, co-director of New York's Tea Party Patriots, insists that she has just blown my mind. "It's 'We the People,'" she repeats. "That's the Tea Party—those three silly words: We. The. People." She says it's impossible to explain to an outsider, even a sympathetic one. "It doesn't make any sense, but it makes all the sense in the world. In Massachusetts the people put out the call, and we helped Scott Brown. And no one can figure us out."

Pepenella may not be able to define the Tea Party appeal, but she has the ingredients right. It is loud, self-regarding, incoherent, and endowed with a bottomless confidence that it speaks for real Americans. It sounds just like Republicans did circa 1994.

The year-old movement is credited with reviving right-wing populism, annihilating President Obama's healthcare reform, and electing Brown to Ted Kennedy's seat. Rasmussen and ABC opinion polls reveal that the American people have a more favorable view of the Tea Party than they do of the Republican Party. The *Wall Street Journal* compares it to the Whiskey Rebellion, heralding it as the fruition of Perot-style populism, a great third force in American politics.

But in reality, the Tea Party is not Pepenella's mysterious vehicle of demo-

cratic will, nor does it signal the emergence of an alternative to Republicans and Democrats. It's a leaderless coalition of conservative activists who for all their revolutionary vim look less likely to take over the GOP than to be taken over by it.

The partiers provide a wellspring of fundraising and volunteers, as they did for Scott Brown and currently are for Republican candidates in Kentucky, California, Colorado, New Hampshire, and Florida. During the healthcare debate, they supplied GOP shock troops for town-hall meetings. At its sharpest edge, the Tea Party phenomenon represents the angry conservative base, punishing incumbent Republicans for any number of infractions: bailouts, support for amnesty, softness on terrorism, or, in the case of Charlie Crist, hugging Obama. But even these most militant rebels aren't upending the establishment. They're still playing safely within the confines of Republican orthodoxy.

At the recent Tea Party confab in Nashville, Sarah Palin suggested, "The GOP would be smart to absorb the Tea Party movement." But it doesn't have to absorb anything. The two are already inseparable. RNC Chair Michael Steele, who recently used teacups as a prop during a speech, says, "If I wasn't doing this job, I'd be out there with the Tea

Partiers." Eating rubber chicken and collecting a pretty good paycheck, no doubt.

The madness began on Feb. 19, 2009 as a bizarre suggestion by Rick Santelli on CNBC. In a disjointed and baldly hypocritical rant, Santelli asked why we should "subsidize the losers' mortgages." The former Drexel Burnham Lambert exec, who supported bailouts for his own industry, thought Washington was going too far when it tried to help Detroit. After shouting that Americans hadn't made an attractive car since 1954, Santelli screamed, "We're thinking of having a Chicago Tea Party in July. All you capitalists who want to come to Lake Michigan, I'll start organizing."

Santelli's yawp came precisely, perhaps suspiciously, at the same time that Beltway institutions were encouraging their activists to start protesting. His YouTube clip became a sensation, and "tea" suddenly stood for "taxed enough already." Brendan Steinhauser, who directs Federal and State Campaigns for FreedomWorks, a libertarian-leaning D.C. operation, recalls that in the week leading up to Santelli's rant, the non-profit had been bombarded with calls from conservative activists awaiting orders. "They had already jammed the phone lines on Capitol Hill," he says, "so we sent out a newsletter, signed by Dick

Armey, telling them to go out into the streets.”

FreedomWorks had the resources to break the Tea Parties big. It began in 1984 as part of Citizens for a Sound Economy, a group financed by libertarian oil magnate David Koch—also one of the wallets behind the Cato Institute. In 2004, CSE split, with one faction becoming Americans for Prosperity (another Tea Party organizer) and the other merging with the Bill Bennett-Jack Kemp policy shop Empower America to become FreedomWorks. Former House Majority Leader Dick Armey was brought in as chairman, with an annual salary in excess of \$550,000; Steve Forbes serves on the board of the group, which commands a budget in the \$8 million range and claims 860,000 members. As the outcry rose, Steinhauser made himself a kind of switchboard operator, connecting activists to each other and arranging lessons in how to get permits. “It’s very Saul Alinsky,” he says of FreedomWorks’ role.

SPOKESMAN MARK SKODA BRUSHED ASIDE TALK OF THIRD PARTIES:

“WE’RE NOT ATTEMPTING TO REPLACE THE RNC.”

Whether this was an authentic grassroots uprising or—as agents of our community-organizer cum president claim—the product of “astroturfing,” the reins were swiftly seized by Republican hacks and opportunists. Internet organizer Michael Patrick Leahy set up conference calls for new Tea Party activists and gave strange marching orders, demanding, for instance, that the first round of protests be called the “Chicago Tea Party” wherever they happened to take place. He went on to publish a book, *Rules for Conservative Radicals*, and now works for longtime Republican operator Richard Viguerie. The popular speaker at Tea Party rallies has also

been charged with six figures’ worth of tax evasion.

Within ten days of Santelli’s rant, Tea Party protests were put on in 40 different cities and began to gain national notice. But as the movement transitioned from Facebook to Fox News, its character began to change. “One of the signs I saw at the first D.C. rally read simply, ‘Atlas Shrugged,’” Steinhauser recalls. “But as the movement went out to the rural areas, it took on a more traditional Republican image, more hawkish on foreign policy, more conservative on social issues.” Less Ron Paul, more Sarah Palin. Talk of abolishing the Fed gave way to partisan shouts about Obama’s socialism. The young revolution began to sound a lot like the brash talk-radio Right.

The Tea Partiers moved to institutionalize themselves, which also helped to lash the movement to the GOP. Tea Party Patriots, the largest group, boasts 1,000 local organizations with 15 million “associates.” Then came Tea Party

Express, which played a major role in Glenn Beck’s 9/12 demonstration in Washington. It organized a caravan of buses to bring activists from across the country, protesting on their way to the protest. The Express is run by Our Country Deserves Better PAC, whose board is made up exclusively of professional and long-experienced Republicans, such as former California State Assemblyman Howard Kaloogian. It is planning another caravan, which launches in Nevada with an attack on Harry Reid and arrives in Boston on tax day.

Another group, Tea Party Nation, which runs a social-networking site for

activists, put on the National Tea Party Convention in Nashville, grabbing headlines when it nabbed Sarah Palin as speaker in return for a fat \$100,000 fee. TPN, run by lawyer Judson Phillips, was criticized for starting out as a for-profit organization, but Phillips deftly used the conference to launch a PAC, Ensuring Liberty Corp. At the announcement, spokesman Mark Skoda brushed aside talk of third parties: “We’re not attempting to replace the RNC.”

This coziness has prompted backlash from more radical Tea Partiers. “What I am witnessing is an attempted defilement of the concept of what the Tea Party’s purposes are and where we are going to be,” Dale Robertson, founder of TeaParty.org, shrieked in a spittle-flecked press release. “The bastardization of our message I find bilious and disingenuous on its face.” Robertson fears that Tea Partiers are being seduced by GOP operatives. “Has our message become so contaminated and ineffective as to be mistaken for the same old political clap-trap vomited from the kool-aid drinking mouths of the Republican elite?”

Even the Tea Party’s Beltway contingent claims to fear a takeover. Steinhauser notes that Michael Steele has been calling FreedomWorks more frequently these days.

But keeping a healthy distance is impossible. Because most Tea Partiers consider themselves conservatives, they have invited the backing of long-established conservative institutions—and the Republicans who come with them. At the National Tea Party Convention in Nashville, local activists signed up for classes from the Leadership Institute, a Morton Blackwell Beltway operation that trains young conservatives to be party organizers, campaign managers, and pundits. The Leadership Institute helped launch video provocateur James O’Keefe on the world, before he dressed

as a pimp or got arrested for tampering with Sen. Mary Landrieu's phones. O'Keefe's accomplice, Joseph Basel, even appeared at the Tea Party Convention.

Activists on the ground, when they consider their relationship to the GOP, either say, "it's complicated" or admit outright that their interests are, for all intents, twinned. "Everyone I know is basically Republican," said Todd Harvey, who organized a Tax Day Tea Party rally in Dutchess County, New York and currently belongs to a small Tea Party group in Sebring, Florida. "I went to the premiere of the Tea Party documentary, and everyone who spoke was a Republican: Jim DeMint, Marsha Blackburn, Dick Armey, and Joe Wilson."

Harvey says that his local group in Florida gets together on a weekly basis. "We talk about the Tea Party movement. It's a feel good session." Anything else? "We support Rubio," Harvey says, of the conservative primary challenger to incumbent Republican Gov. Charlie Crist. Of his efforts in suburban New York, Harvey says that his Tea Party activists mostly busy themselves with getting Republicans elected: "We replaced some incumbents on the town boards and got some people on the county legislature." His experience—from anger to activism to Republican politicking—is being replicated in the hundreds of Tea Party cells nationwide.

Curiously, the phenom got the most energized and received the most credit for backing Scott Brown, a pro-choice Republican, who supported Mitt Romney's Massachusetts healthcare plan—one similar to the Senate scheme he now claims to oppose. He is, by all appearances one of those dread "RINOs"—Republican in Name Only—that conservatives once despised.

At the National Tea Party conference, attendees wore pins with Scott Brown's figure under the "American Idol" logo.

Palin referred to him and recently elected New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie as "ours." It didn't matter that Brown and Christie won as moderate Republicans running against badly damaged Democratic candidates. Their victories infuriated liberals, and that counts most of all to Tea Partiers.

Already, the GOP is implementing strategies to enfold the Tea Party within its tent forever. The South Carolina state GOP announced in early February that it would unite with Palmetto State Tea Party groups to share resources. State Chair Karen Floyd says, "This is not something the state party by edict pushed down. This is something the grassroots pushed up with an understanding that we are stronger together than apart."

more easily accomplished than winning a presidential election," he says. Steinhäuser, cribbing from Tocqueville, believes that as the Tea Parties mature they will simply become a movement dedicated to "civic engagement based on the Constitution and Founding Fathers."

They're all wrong. Despite the real idealism of some of its activists both inside and outside the Beltway, the Tea Party is nothing more than a Republican-managed tantrum. Send the conservative activists into the streets to vent their anger. Let Obama feel the brunt of it. And if the GOP shows a modicum of contrition, the runaways will come home.

That plan is working perfectly. The power of Washington seems so remote

THE TEA PARTY MOVEMENT CREATES THE CONDITIONS IN WHICH THE ACTIVIST BASE OF THE GOP CAN FEEL LIKE IT IS PART OF THE GAME AGAIN.

In Texas, the Tea Party is even threatening to swallow Rep. Ron Paul, the Texas Republican whom many still call the Father of the Tea Parties. While his 2008 presidential campaign helped inject the Tea Party language back into popular discourse, his three congressional primary challengers this year all claim allegiance to the Tea Party. Paul's sins, according to them, are in foreign policy. So much for the movement being united by fiscal issues only.

What is the future of the Tea Party? Harvey believes the mutineers will satisfy themselves with electing more conservatives and then go home, having done some good. J.P. Freire, the *Washington Examiner* editor instrumental in organizing the D.C. protest, thinks that as long as the Tea Party stays decentralized, and even battling among various factions, it can do some good on the state level. "That's a goal that is way

to most people that even a scripted acknowledgement of their grievances tends to pacify them. Attendees at the national conference were treated to every kind of insult that could be hurled at McCain and, to a lesser extent, Bush. "A McCain presidency would have been as bad, or worse than the Obama administration," Phillips said.

RedState.com editor Erick Erickson said upon watching the Tea Party activists in Nashville that Republicans should be afraid. But what does it matter if malcontents holed up in a southern hotel pour their anger on has-beens who will never run again? Especially when it seems to soften them to Sarah Palin.

The Tea Party movement creates the conditions in which the activist base of the GOP can feel like it is part of the game again. They can forget Bush-era betrayals, swallow their doubts, and vote Republican this November. The

next Reagan is coming, the next Contract With America will work, the next Republican nominee will be one of us. All it takes is for someone to appreciate the anger—and it doesn't matter that she supported the bailouts that enraged them or the candidate who forsook their ideas and support. Just as in 1994, Republicans have only to keep up the pretense that they, and they alone, are responding to an urgent uprising across the country.

Brilliantly, Sarah the Maverick mentioned her husband's "independence" from the GOP during her Tea Party Convention speech, referring to Todd Palin's membership in the Alaskan Independence Party. Her suggestion of outsider status charged her bond with the conventioners, but the veep nominee was not introducing Tea Partiers to possibilities outside their GOP abode. She was merely validating their feeling that Republicans have to win them over. Eventually, they will give in. They always do.

Judson Phillips, playing the affable host, told the crowd that just two words scared our nation's liberals, then almost whispered them: President Palin. He could easily have come up with two words to scare Republicans: third party. He could have found a pair that would rock the entire establishment: Revolution Now! But that's too risqué, even when everyone is hopped up on tea.

The Tea Party movement may be a bit frisky and unpredictable, but it will always have a warm cup to serve the GOP. In Nashville, the chanting went up tentatively at first, then gained force: "Run, Sarah, Run!" She graciously accepted their adoration—then left in the company of the Republican professionals who make up her entourage. ■

Michael Brendan Dougherty is a former TAC associate editor and a 2009-10 Phillips Journalism Fellow.

No Life on MARs

This latest populist revolt is not the rise of the Right.

By John Derbyshire

The social class on which [Will Herberg] and I both once pinned our hope of national regeneration, those whom we jokingly referred to as 'the Archie Bunkers,' has gone the way of the dinosaur. It has been replaced by a multitude of vastly more radicalized versions of Meathead, Archie's fashionably liberal son-in-law who by now could be an editorial writer for the *Wall Street Journal*.

—Paul E. Gottfried, *Encounters*

THE TEA PARTY MOVEMENT seems to put the lie to Professor Gottfried's despair. At the movement's February convention, the Archie Bunkers were out in force: politically unsophisticated working- and middle-class Americans asserting themselves against the Meatheads of fashionable liberalism, into whose hands the levers of power had passed barely a year before.

As Herberg and Gottfried pinned their hopes on those Archie Bunkers, so Sam Francis, a few years later, saw the possibility of national regeneration in the conservative surge that had helped elect Ronald Reagan. Examining the base of citizens from which that surge drew its strength, Francis borrowed a tag from sociologist Donald Warren, calling them "Middle American Radicals." These insurrectionists, Francis said in his 1982 essay "Message from MARs," had grasped the essential power conflict in postwar American society. That conflict is not between rich and poor, as both Old Left and Old Right had supposed,

but between, on the one hand, an alliance of meritocratic elites with underclass government clients, and on the other, those whose work and enterprise feeds both components of that alliance. Our political contest is not top vs. bottom, but top-and-bottom-united vs. middle.

In a different essay 16 years later, by way of pooh-poohing secessionist talk, Francis gave his clearest statement of this dichotomy:

Today, the main political line of division in the United States is not between the regions of North and South (insofar as such regions can still be said to exist) but between elite and nonelite. As I have tried to make plain ... for the last 15 years, the elite, based in Washington, New York, and a few large metropolises, allies with the underclass against Middle Americans, who pay the taxes, do the work, fight the wars, suffer the crime, and endure their own political and cultural dispossession at the hands of the elite and its underclass vanguard.

Francis's thought shows an interesting development. "Message from MARs" is written in the rather abstract diction of Machiavelli and James Burnham. A ruling class had established itself with aid from underclass allies to whom it had given promises of provision and protection. This ruling class had become careless and decadent. A rising group sought to replace it. Middle American radicals could be that rising group, said

Francis: "The MARs form a sociopolitical force now coalescing into a class and perhaps into a new elite that will replace the managerial elite."

By 1998, Francis's reports from the class-war front were darker, more urgent, and more tribal. The overclass-underclass alliance, he said, had seized on a new strategy for strengthening itself: the importation of massive underclass reinforcements via unrestricted immigration of poor, unskilled Third Worlders from regions of low civilizational achievement—people bound to end up on the elites' clientage rolls in perpetuity.

The elites had not scrupled to enlist the most primitive and dangerous social emotions in defense of their power: "The leaders of the alien underclass, as well as those of the older black underclass, invoke race in explicit terms, and they leave no doubt that their main enemy is the white man and his institutions and patterns of belief. ... Middle Americans now face [the imperative] of constructing their own autonomous political movement that can take back their nation rather than assisting the new underclass and the globalist ruling class in breaking it up. The time left for us to do so is shorter than it has ever [been] before in our history."

Twelve years further on from that, here are the Tea Partiers vowing to "take back America." Is there any real prospect of their doing so? If the "time left for us to do so" was short in 1998, how much shorter is it now? Why did those Middle American Radicals of 30 years ago—Donald Warren actually coined the phrase in 1976—not fulfill the hopes Sam Francis invested in them? Are the Meatheads now immovably entrenched as a ruling class, the Archies condemned to a permanent impotence relieved only by occasional spasms of semi-organized resistance, easily quashed or co-opted? Is the Tea Party

movement merely one of those fits? Will elitism always vanquish populism?

I would give pessimistic answers to all those questions. To understand the prospects for the Tea Partiers—or rather, their lack of prospects—recall the fate of Reagan-era Middle American Radicalism.

The MAR phenomenon had emerged from the crash of liberalism in the late 1970s. The busing and ERA wars, stagflation, the gas crises, and the Tehran hostage debacle left liberals chastened and the political Right fired up with indignation. Conservative intellectuals like Sam Francis had good reason to think that with its leadership demoralized, the overclass-underclass alliance might be brought down by concerted action on the part of disgruntled heartland populists.

They failed to appreciate the degree to which ruling-class values, already long dominant in the media and universities, had seeped into Middle America's soul. Even as the leadership of the liberal project overreached and stalled in the late 1970s, rates of illegitimacy and marriage failure crept steadily upward, gay rights advanced, abortionists plied their trade unhindered, and popular culture coarsened. As the malign demographic consequences of the 1965 Immigration Act began to dawn on conservative thinkers, the middle class they hoped to awaken remained as intimidated as ever by liberal ruling-class rhetoric about "nativism" and "racism."

Our intellectuals also overestimated the economic radicalism of the MARs, projecting their own cherished abstractions onto citizens who, however aggrieved they might feel about government's grosser impositions, had no wish to let go of their Social Security, Medicare, public-school and state-college establishments, or the patriotic satisfactions of having the world's largest and best-equipped military.

Political activism by new groups in any case follows a parabolic trajectory. It is a fundamental truth of politics in open societies that any person likely to give significant time to politics already does so by early adulthood. A contentious local issue may fill your high school auditorium with angry citizens for an evening or two, but people will soon lose interest and drift away. Political activism is the enduring enthusiasm of a very few, like contract bridge.

Also like bridge, insider politics has its own stylized language of phrases and signals, not easy for the newcomer to master. Archie may grumble picturesquely about the state of public affairs. If his job or property values are threatened, you may get him out to a rally. Eventually, though, his heart will return to where it belongs: his family, his TV, his job, his skeet club. He is, after all, middle-aged (to judge from the Tea Party gatherings) and cannot easily acquire new habits. Meathead knows all this and can wait the situation out.

So it will be with the Tea Partiers. I see no sign that the liberal establishment is seriously concerned by them. Everyone understands that the Obama administration was reckless, turning up the heat too high under that pot in which the proverbial frog is being boiled. The fire will be turned down so that the boiling can continue at its former barely perceptible pace. The Tea Partiers will be marginalized by appeals to political correctness, a thing easily done as practically all of them are white. The less committed will drift away; the minority that remain will be folded into the Republican Party, after first being subjected to a brief, painless operation to remove the "R" from "MAR." Peace will descend, and all will be as it was, the elite secure in its power, the underclass secure with its dole, the middle classes back on the treadmill to pay the bills run up by the elites and their clients. Our

— OLD AND RIGHT —

rulers will say what imperial Chinese generals used to say after laying waste some rebellious prefecture: harmony has been restored.

The first steps have already been taken. Meghan McCain, a self-described “progressive Republican,” has publicly deplored the “innate racism” of the Tea Party movement. Meghan’s dad—who thought the much more explicit racism of the Rev. Jeremiah Wright a topic not proper to be mentioned when contesting for the presidency with Reverend Wright’s parishioner and who favors continuing mass Third World immigration—has been endorsed for his Senate race this year by Sarah Palin, the darling of the Tea Party Convention. McCain’s primary challenger, former Congressman J.D. Hayworth, whose opinions coincide very precisely with those of the Tea Partiers, will have to find endorsements elsewhere.

Perhaps it is just as simple as this: a meritocratic elite is, by definition, smarter than the rest of us. It can always “control the discourse,” planting shame and doubt in the minds of those who seek to challenge it, manipulating their sensibilities, feeding them a steady diet of soma through media and educational outlets, bewildering and outfoxing them with bogus appeals to the higher emotions. Perhaps it is all an unequal contest.

And it is probably too late in any case. The good intentions of the Tea Partiers could not, even if translated into action, stop the slide to national bankruptcy and humiliation. If Sam Francis were still here, I am sure he would tell us what the prophet Jeremiah told the people of Judah: “The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved.” ■

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CONTEMPORARY CONSERVATIVES place a higher value upon private property, the free market, and production for profit than do liberals and radicals, past and present. A substantial segment of the American people also appears to believe along these lines, thus calling themselves “conservative” or “right of center.” But, alas for conservative values, a very large majority of Americans, including those in the business class, behave differently from what might be inferred from expressed creed. George Will has noted that there are 2,200 trade associations based in Washington, D.C. In many instances their offices are seeking to protect a given business interest’s freedom, but in a great many more, the objective is, as the phrase has it, getting a piece of power.

But let us not lay the cudgel on business alone. The rush to Washington, D.C. for participation in the power structure is to be seen elsewhere: in the universities and schools; in the churches—eager for some new tax exemption or to promote some new welfare reform; in the labor unions; in just about every sector indeed of American society. The family is important: there must, therefore, be a plethora of federal laws and agencies protecting women and children. The local community is important: there must, therefore, be a vast community redevelopment act passed by Congress and an appropriate bureau established. Given present currents, one has the sense that if the move toward decentralization and localism did become major, it would culminate in some new Federal Bureau or Department, doubtless titled “Department of Decentralization and Localism.” But I am being cynical. The great question that must be answered by conservatives is that of the relevance in our time of such values as the family, neighborhood, locality, religion, social rank, voluntary association, and, alone making these possible, limited political government.

It is easy to caricature such values, to declare them mere survivals of the past, as out of touch with anything important institutionally as, say, Halloween festivals. This is the real dilemma of the conservative in our populist society: how to make the essential values of conservatism seem important to Americans; important enough to live by. Everyone, I assume, apart from a few militant women’s liberationists and homosexuals, is “in favor of” marriage, family, and their embedded ideals. The same holds true, undoubtedly, with respect to voluntary association and neighborhood. Similarly, there can’t be many Americans passionately opposed to religion. And the evidence suggests that most of us accept, even like, some degree of inequality in society, some kind of hierarchy, especially that based upon visible achievement. And a rising number of Americans express disillusionment with and distrust of big, centralized, bureaucratized Federal government.

But what we would like to know is the degree of intensity of such beliefs compared with the degree of intensity of belief we find among those for whom the centralized welfare state, reaching all areas of life, is the ideal. Alas, one thing is clear. Given the number of Americans who, whatever their professed principles, are nevertheless in chronic quest of Federal contributions to family, school, daycare center, to the unemployed, the ailing, and the old aged, irrespective of the often-mammoth bureaucracies which are or will be associated with these contributions and the invasions of personal privacy which must necessarily go with the bureaucracies, it is hard for any genuine conservative to be very optimistic.

—Robert A. Nisbet, “The Dilemma of Conservatives in a Populist Society,” 1978

While England Sleeps

The Iraq inquiry that is certain to uncover nothing

By Rod Liddle

THERE IS A GRAVE anxiety that gnaws away at Sir John Chilcot as he daily conducts his inquiry into the war in Iraq. By 11 o'clock each morning, as some former Foreign Office mandarin is dissembling about weapons of mass destruction or the legality of the invasion, you can see Sir John beginning to look troubled. A little after midday, this has developed into a rumbling and a mild panic. Soon enough, he will interrupt the evidence and inquire politely, but with some urgency, if perhaps now might be the right time to break for lunch? Or, he will add, in a spirit of democracy but with a slightly crestfallen expression, should we wait until 1 o'clock?

Lunch is an important part of the Chilcot Inquiry, Britain's third sort-of inquest into the events that led up to the invasion of Iraq. This one has been convened because the present Labour administration, under Gordon Brown, wishes to decouple itself from the gravest failure of the previous Labour administration, under Tony Blair. Or at least I assume that's the idea. Anyway, over the course of several interminable months all of the British people who had anything to do with the war will be paraded before the inquiry and asked stuff.

I don't think you Americans would quite believe the Chilcot Inquiry unless you saw it. Even then you might be fooled into thinking it is a production of a hitherto unknown early Terrence Rattigan play, one of those anti-dramas where titled, well-mannered people who

attended Eton behave with exquisite politeness toward titled, well-mannered people who attended Harrow. It is a snapshot of Britain that could have been taken with a pinhole camera in 1896. If nothing else, it is at least a salutary reminder that no matter how modern Britain pretends to be, it is not really so. Not at the top.

The counterargument is that at least we are prepared to investigate this far-ago, to ask the salient questions. Well, indeed—although that depends upon what you mean by “investigate” and “salient.” We have already had two inquiries into the Iraq War—the Butler Inquiry and the Hutton Inquiry—both of which largely exonerated the government, at least partly as a consequence of the extremely narrow remits that were set down at the start of each process. Now we have a third that,

Please forgive the skepticism, or even cynicism, but public inquiries chaired by amenable establishment judges and consisting of amenable establishment figures have been a mainstay of the British system for a century or so, and they have never poked a finger of blame at the government. This may, of course, be because over the last 100 years the British government has at all times behaved with the utmost probity, honesty, and decency. Certainly this is the line taken by government ministers over Hutton and Butler: You see, we told you so. It's just that you people are determined to vilify the government and are not prepared to accept the official decision.

Inquiries of this kind only ever work when they are held 30 or 40 years later, and everybody who might be implicated by them is dead. If we held an inquiry into Suez right now it is entirely possible

LUNCH IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE CHILCOT INQUIRY, BRITAIN'S THIRD SORT-OF INQUEST INTO THE EVENTS THAT LED UP TO THE INVASION OF IRAQ.

according to Chilcot, is “not a trial,” is not designed to establish guilt or innocence or to apportion blame, but is instead an amiable ramble around the houses before a spot of lunch at the Garrick Club. Thus there has been an almost total absence of forensic inquiry and follow-up questions. Witnesses say things that clearly conflict with things they were saying during the run-up to war, but they are never asked to reconcile these contradictions.

that the chairman would find that Britain may just have overstepped the mark a little with regard to Egypt, but benefit of hindsight, past is a different country, not much we can do about it now, etc.

Let's take a look at the people doing the inquiring. There's Sir John Chilcot in the chair, a former civil servant attached to the security services who has been accused of “spoon-feeding” easy questions to the witnesses and has told them

that they need not answer questions they consider inappropriate. Then there's the eminent historian Sir Martin Gilbert, who was four-square behind the invasion of Iraq from day one and has already served on the Butler Inquiry, which cleared the government of misleading the public and the House of Commons. Then we have Professor Sir Lawrence Freedman, who wrote some of Tony Blair's foreign-policy speeches, including the one our former prime minister made in Chicago where he outlined the criteria by which civilized countries like Britain and the U.S. might wage war against Third World Islamic hellholes. Are you beginning to get a flavor of this thing? There's the former diplomat Sir Roderic Lyne, who, in his genteel way, has asked the most penetrating questions so far. And Baroness Usha Prashar, who is presumably on the panel because she is a nice middle-class Asian lady who has done many nice things in her life but has so far not asked a single question of pertinence or point. These are the people charged with the task of discovering the truth.

From the witnesses—mainly civil servants but with a sprinkling of charismatic guests such as Blair, his spin doctor Alastair Campbell, and former Foreign Secretary Jack Straw—we have heard the same stuff we heard in the Butler Inquiry.

We know that even in the autumn of 2002, Iraq was considered less of a threat to the West than Libya and Iran. We have heard again how Blair pledged to stand beside the U.S. in its dealings with Iraq as early as spring 2002, and from that moment on we were headed to war, with or without the United Nations' approval. It has been reiterated that the September dossier, which detailed Iraq's threat to the West, was not merely based upon flawed intelligence, but was "sexed up" in order to provide a compelling case for the

public—and the House of Commons and the cabinet—to take military action. We have heard once again that in the last month or two before the invasion, the British government received persuasive intelligence reports that Iraq had no program for weapons of mass destruction, posed no threat, had no official links with any Islamic terrorist organizations, and was beginning to comply with the UN weapons inspectors.

WE HAVE HAD CONFIRMED WHAT WE KNEW ALL ALONG: BRITAIN, VIA A SHORT CONVERSATION BETWEEN OUR PRIME MINISTER AND PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH, COMMITTED ITSELF TO DOING PRETTY MUCH WHATEVER THE U.S. WANTED.

In short, we have had confirmed what we knew all along: Britain, via a short conversation between our prime minister and President George W. Bush, committed itself to doing pretty much whatever the U.S. wanted to do about Iraq. As this criterion for an invasion might not prove sufficiently alluring to the public or to Parliament, Blair and his close lieutenants flammed up Iraq's military threat in a manner that deceived all of our major institutions. A nuclear program? Nope. A program of WMD that was "beyond all reasonable doubt"? Nope. An ability to strike at British targets within 45 minutes? Don't be so bloody stupid. This much we knew already, but the cavalier approach to those nonexistent weapons of mass destruction continues to thrill the layman. We discovered, early on in the inquiry, that Iraq's possession of chemical weapons was not predicated upon it having, uh, chemical weapons. As one sage put it, as a country with a vibrant petro-chemical industry, Iraq had the ability to create chemical weapons pretty quickly and had no need to stockpile them. As it also possessed ballistic missiles—a means of delivery of those hypothetical chemical

weapons—then de facto, it had chemical weapons. Even if it didn't.

Only Brits get a chance to take part in this production. There will be no Bush or Rumsfeld or Cheney. More pertinently, no Hans Blix.

The spin from the major players—the cabinet, Blair, Campbell—continues unabated. They say, in the most reasonable of terms: listen, we made a decision to invade Iraq. That may have been the

wrong decision, and we can have a valuable and rewarding debate about that. But come on, do not suggest that we lied or acted under anything other than good faith.

The complete reverse of the argument is the truth. It may well be that invading Iraq was, in the long term, the right thing to do—although I would disagree, and so would many others over here. But it is beyond dispute that the government dissembled, it exaggerated, it distorted. It misled the British Parliament and the British people. Its reasons for invading Iraq were simply not those that it stated at the time. Instead of commissioning intelligence reports to ascertain the nature of Iraq's threat to either the West or to neighboring Arab countries, it made up its mind and twisted the intelligence to suit that conclusion. This was pretty clear shortly after the invasion, and it is even clearer now. But don't expect our Chilcot Inquiry to conclude such a thing. It is not there to apportion blame. ■

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Hoosier Hopeful

Antiwar Republican John Hostettler aims for the Senate.

By W. James Antle III

IN DECEMBER, John Hostettler decided to take on a job few members of his party wanted: Republican challenger to popular Sen. Evan Bayh (D-Ind.). The national GOP did not place Bayh's seat very high on its list of 2010 pickup opportunities. In 2008, Indiana defied its Republican roots when it went narrowly for Barack Obama. Bayh vs. Hostettler looked like a long shot, but it would at least carry the distinction of pitting a Democrat who had supported the Iraq War against a Republican who opposed it from the beginning.

Then came Scott Brown's special election to the U.S. Senate in January. Suddenly, the sky seemed the limit. If a Republican could be elected to Ted Kennedy's seat, party recruiters asked, why couldn't they take Evan Bayh's? After all, it had once belonged to Dan Quayle. By February, Bayh himself had apparently decided the seat was no longer safe and dramatically announced his retirement.

Hostettler, a soft-spoken, cerebral mechanical engineer first decided to run for Congress in Indiana's Eighth District in 1994, challenging incumbent Democratic Rep. Frank McCloskey. Despite the district's volatile nature—its competitiveness led handicappers to call it the "Bloody Eighth"—the national party was slow to sense an opportunity to take out McCloskey.

But Hostettler was not. He ran a vigorous campaign, tying the incumbent to the national Democratic Party and blasting him as "Frank McClinton." Hostettler mobilized grassroots conservative

activists, particularly gun owners and pro-life evangelical Christians, who were ready to rid Washington of Bill Clinton's minions. He upset McCloskey and was re-elected five times.

Republicans in Washington are eagerly anticipating another 1994, but they don't seem interested in history repeating itself with Hostettler. Even before Bayh dropped out, the National Republican Senatorial Committee (NRSC) was desperate to come up with a different challenger. Their first choice was Rep. Mike Pence, a genial Hoosier who is popular with movement conservatives and already chairman of the House Republican Conference.

William Kristol tried to start a "draft Pence" riot last year, when Scott Brown was still a gleam in Republicans' eyes. Praising a Pence statement opposing the Democratic healthcare bill, Kristol made the case that the country needed an "articulate, conservative first-term Senator who had knocked off a 'safe' Democrat in a state Obama carried in 2008." Foreign policy went unmentioned in Kristol's plea—and so did Hostettler.

Yet a Rasmussen poll released as Pence was in talks with the NRSC did mention Hostettler. The results: Pence led Bayh by three points, 47 percent to 44 percent. Hostettler trailed Bayh by three, 44 percent to 41 percent. A third candidate, state Sen. Marlin Stutzman, was 12 points behind Bayh. Not a sure bet for anyone—and given the margin of error, no clear evidence that Pence was a stronger Republican nominee than Hostettler.

Pence decided to take a pass on the race. "After much prayer and deliberation," he said in a statement, "I have decided to remain in the House and to seek re-election to the 6th Congressional District in 2010." This ran counter to Kristol's advice. "If [Pence] won, he'd be a leading possibility for national office as soon as 2012," the *Weekly Standard* editor wrote. "If he loses, but runs a respectable race—which surely he'll do—he'd have a good shot to succeed Mitch Daniels as governor in 2012."

But Pence is already talked about as a serious candidate for governor, and even for president, in 2012. He will also be in line to become at least the majority whip if Republicans retake control of the House in 2010, a development that no longer seems remote. Given those facts, challenging Bayh seemed to be a risky move for Pence, while Hostettler has nothing to lose. Hostettler himself would have been a problem for Pence. As a blogger for the Swing State Project put it, "Pence could find himself stepping into an unenviable situation that replicates a lot of other Republican Senate primaries: he'd be running as the 'establishment' candidate against a movement conservative outsider even further to his right."

The party establishment's next choice was former Sen. Dan Coats, who previously held the seat and has won statewide office before—most recently in 1992, six years before he decided to retire rather than face Evan Bayh in a general election. While he had a generally conservative voting record in Con-

gress, his post-congressional career has seen him lobbying for bailouts, government subsidies, and the confirmation of Harriet Miers to the Supreme Court.

Writes Timothy Carney in the *Washington Examiner*, Coats's "clients include a lineup of subsidy sucklers and regulatory robber barons, many of which spent 2009 at President Obama's side, fighting for the Democrats' 'reform' agenda." On the bailouts, government growth, and crony capitalism that anger the Right's Tea Party activists, Bayh and Coats have often been in cahoots rather than in conflict. And Democrats were quick to pounce on Coats's favorable comments about living outside of Indiana.

A Daily Kos/Research 2000 poll found Bayh above 50 percent, in a much stronger position to win re-election than Rasmussen showed. But it affirmed the earlier poll's finding that Hostettler was no less competitive than the NRSC's preferred candidate—in fact, he ran two points ahead of Coats. Argued Markos Moulitsas, "When you run corrupt Washington insider against corrupt Washington insider, the opposition remains uninspired." Now the Democrats' Washington insider is gone from the race.

Why does the national GOP seem to want anyone but Hostettler? Throughout his six terms in the House, Hostettler eschewed political action committee support and therefore struggled to raise money. Coats is well connected and unlikely to have that problem. Secondly, Hostettler was defeated for re-election in 2006, garnering just 39 percent of the vote in a district that went for George W. Bush and John McCain.

Then there is the matter of Hostettler's independence. "I'm sure the NRSC called somebody up in the House leadership and asked about John," says a Hostettler-friendly conservative activist. "The answer they probably got was, 'When I needed his vote, that son of a bitch wouldn't give it to me.'"

Hostettler voted against the Medicare prescription-drug benefit and No Child Left Behind. He voted against the federal marriage amendment, preferring instead to preserve traditional marriage by stripping federal courts of jurisdiction over the issue. He was one of 11 Republicans to vote against the \$51.8 billion Hurricane Katrina relief package. In 1996, he was one of 17 Republicans who voted against a budget compromise backed by then House Speaker Newt Gingrich that would have ended the federal government shutdown. Gingrich canceled a fundraiser for Hostettler as a result.

Hostettler's biggest dissent, however, was on Iraq. He had opposed making regime change the official U.S. policy by voting against the Iraq Liberation Act in 1998. Then Hostettler was one of just six

League, have criticized the book's references to Israeli security concerns and neoconservatives: "Hostettler's reasoning is nothing new, following the line of attack in *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy* by academics John J. Mearsheimer and Stephen M. Walt."

Hostettler rejects this as a mischaracterization of his views, but is unapologetic about his disagreements with neoconservatives. "The neocons know what a Senator Hostettler would mean," he says. "They would rather have Evan Bayh as the lead sponsor of sanctions against Iran, bringing us to the brink of war or a Republican who would do the same thing." Hostettler argues, "They want to mold the Republican Party's image on foreign policy, and I am not of that mold."

HOSTETTLER WAS **ONE OF JUST SIX** HOUSE REPUBLICANS TO VOTE AGAINST AUTHORIZING THE INVASION OF IRAQ, WHILE DEMOCRATS LIKE BAYH WERE STILL ON BOARD.

House Republicans to vote against authorizing the invasion of Iraq, while Democrats like Bayh were still on board. At the time, Hostettler questioned the need for pre-emptive strikes and said he was not persuaded by the evidence the Bush administration offered for Saddam Hussein's weapons of mass destruction. In the floor speech explaining his vote, he cited St. Augustine and Just War theory, as well as the Founding Fathers.

After leaving Congress, Hostettler stepped up his criticism of the war. He even wrote an antiwar book, *Nothing for the Nation: Who Got What Out of Iraq*. Former House Majority Leader Dick Armey, a Republican who recanted his support for the war, praised the book: "Had we listened to Hostettler at the time, we would not have done it. ... For years I have known I was wrong. Now I know why I was wrong." Others, such as Abe Foxman of the Anti-Defamation

Ironically, Hostettler's foreign-policy views could help him overcome one of his biggest liabilities: raising money. The success of Ron Paul's Internet-based "money bombs" has recently carried over for other antiwar Republicans. But in the primary, Hostettler must also avoid alienating his conservative Christian base, which has tended to support the Bush Doctrine—in that regard, Rand Paul, whose bid for the GOP nomination in Kentucky has been endorsed by conservatives ranging from the elder Paul to Sarah Palin, may be a model.

Foreign policy is likely to remain a hotly debated topic in the general election, where the probable Democratic replacements for Bayh are all centrists not known for their antiwar views. But first, Hostettler will have to get there. ■

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Counterfeiting Conservatism

Are you sure you want a revolution?

By Patrick J. Deneen

CONSERVATISM IS THE “ISM” that came into being to resist the existence of “isms.” This makes for potentially insurmountable challenges: How to evince a political belief that avoids the rigidity of ideology? Can one take a political position without becoming a political program? Can the principled stand against a politics based upon the application of universalized principle avoid becoming universalized?

From the first moment that conservatism was articulated as a philosophy—Edmund Burke’s critique of the “mechanic philosophy” of the French Enlightenment that sought the creation of a new society along stiff geometric lines—a philosophy of tradition was born, distinct from the unconscious practices that make up any given tradition. Even as Burke cautioned against a revolutionary spirit that sought to unclothe the mysterious origins and meanings of practices, conservatism was itself forced to call attention the very existence of the thing it wanted to keep shrouded from inspection.

Conservatism—*qua* “ism”—was thus defined by its opposition to a radical adversary. The dangers of various ideologies to traditional practice forced conservatism to articulate itself in ways that were distinctively unconservative. Even as Burke—and after him, thinkers like Michael Oakeshott and Bertrand de Jouvenel—denounced “theoretical” approaches to politics, the defense of tradition itself required theoretical articulation. Ironically, every time conservatism scored a point intellectually or

politically, it lost ground, since its very articulation depended on terms set by its opponent.

Given that conservatism originated in ways that cut against the conservative temperament, over time it’s hardly surprising that conservatism has begun to resemble non- and even anti-conservative positions not only in tactics but in content. Because conservatism defines itself relative to the current position of its more liberal opponent, it has come occupy space that has been abandoned by a leftward-moving opposition.

This is particularly true in contemporary American politics, where conservatism has not only crystallized into an “orthodoxy”—as Sam Tanenhaus argues in his recent book *The Death of Conservatism*—but into a political movement that employs scorched-earth political tactics in defense of ends and policies that stand to conserve very little. This is hardly a new development in response to the election of President Obama: in the 1980s, it was barely noted as peculiar that one of Ronald Reagan’s intellectual heroes was Thomas Paine—Edmund Burke’s *bête noire*—or that a subsequent generation of conservatives have defined themselves almost exclusively by their devotion to the revolutionary principles of the Declaration of Independence. Increasingly, political conservatism has stood less for a defense of the principles articulated by Russell Kirk—custom, variety, prudence, imperfectibility, community, and restraint of power—and has instead allied itself with national and even inter-

national objectives destructive to custom, variety, and community. Conservatives increasingly demand support for the expansion of military and economic power, resource exploitation with little discussion of impact upon future generations, a globalized market, a standardization of law that is increasingly based in Kantian (rather than common-law) reasoning, “democratization” abroad, federal rather than local allegiances, mobility, and a close affiliation with corporations and the financial industry—hardly hotbeds of conservative practice. The movement’s tactics—demanding obeisance by those who would adopt its label and destruction of those who would oppose it—strike one as more Alinsky than Kirk or Oakeshott.

How this has come to pass would require a lengthy treatise, but perhaps a few discrete causes can be delineated. In diagnosing the transformation of contemporary American conservatism into increasingly a monolithic and even ideological movement, I would point to three developments that move from the institutional to the philosophical to the theological. First, changes in electoral politics, especially the primary system, have rewarded ideological purity over prudential reasoning and due regard for particularity. Second, in response to increasingly nationalized and radicalized forms of liberalism, conservatism has tended over time to occupy the space abandoned by that leftward trajectory. While more “conservative” than its liberal counterpart, conservatism has thus become more ideologically liberal.

And lastly, in its political incarnation, conservatism has embraced versions of old religious heresies, particularly Manicheism and Gnosticism. It may be that conservatism was all along doomed to travel this course.

The direct primary was an innovation of the Progressive movement during the early 20th century. Aimed at removing the power of nomination from party bosses huddled in smoke-filled backrooms, it was hoped that the direct primary would open the process to the people. Progressives of both parties—whether Democrats such as Woodrow Wilson or Republicans such as Theodore Roosevelt—supported the idea.

But in a prescient article entitled “The Direct Primary” written in 1909, during the high-water mark of Progressive enthusiasm for reform, Princeton political scientist Henry Jones Ford warned that the direct primary might take power out of the hands of party chiefs, but it would not result in a paradisaical people’s democracy. Instead, he warned that power—which he considered ineliminable in politics—would flow to other places that would systematically benefit from the new arrangements. In particular, he foresaw the replacement of party operatives, who had historically chosen candidates on the grounds of local circumstance, experience, and party loyalty, with a “plutocracy” of monied interests that would increasingly be needed to finance expensive primary races. His analysis—prescient by dint of its conservative inclination to consider “unintended consequences,” a form of analysis that was not embraced by the more influential Progressives, such as his Princeton colleague Woodrow Wilson, who was responsible for hiring Ford—intimates why ideology would begin to replace broadly political considerations in the nominating, and subsequent governing, process.

Elections are increasingly financed by

advocacy groups with national agendas. In many cases, the lion’s share of funding for Senate—and increasingly House—races comes from out-of-state or out-of-district sources. The plutocracy about which Ford warned tends to reward candidates of ideological purity as they most neatly reflect a set of nationally defined partisan priorities. Their influence has been magnified by the low voter turnout in primary elections and the fact that highly motivated ideological or single-issue voters are the ones that turn out. In the case of conservatives, this means that primaries have become the loci where “impure” candidates can be eliminated from electoral consideration.

Unsurprisingly, partisan rancor in Washington has risen to fever pitch, with representatives of each party conscious that efforts to compromise, or bring to bear local concerns that might put them in tension with the national agenda, will result in calls for a primary challenge. Thus the Progressive reforms intended to make the Ameri-

calization of politics and thereby the rise of ideology as a major factor in electoral politics.

It is easy to forget that it was a Progressive ambition to orient the devotion of the American public to the nation and away from their localities. The “Pledge of Allegiance”—now cherished by conservatives as a traditional civil prayer—was written in 1892 and advocated by Francis Bellamy, a Christian socialist, cousin of socialist utopian Edward Bellamy. Such advocates of nationalism saw particular and mediating allegiances—especially those of immigrant groups like the Irish and Italians—as a danger to liberal democracy and instead advanced efforts to instill fealty to the *idea* of the nation. Thus, American history increasingly became focused on learning about the Declaration and the Constitution rather than particular people of achievement such as Paul Revere, Betsy Ross, and Nathan Hale (people with strong local affiliations, to boot).

Nationalism was understood to be a

HE FORESAW THE REPLACEMENT OF PARTY OPERATIVES, WHO HAD HISTORICALLY CHOSEN CANDIDATES ON THE GROUNDS OF LOCAL CIRCUMSTANCE, EXPERIENCE, AND PARTY LOYALTY, WITH A “PLUTOCRACY” OF MONIED INTERESTS.

can system more democratic have made representatives more likely to respond to a small but vocal group of ideological activists rather than to negotiate between the varied voices of their particular districts or states and national priorities. The party system was assaulted not only for being corrupt but more fundamentally for being an obstacle to the creation of a national political system. The direct primary—along with the 17th Amendment, which provided for the direct election of senators—led to the nation-

necessary step in liberating individuals from local cultures that put limits upon the full expression of a more universal self-understanding, as well as the goals of personal autonomy and upward mobility. Thinkers such as Herbert Croly and John Dewey, writing for the appropriately titled *New Republic*, called for a new religiously-tinted devotion to the nation as the source of individual liberation and national greatness. President McKinley—having defeated the populist William Jennings Bryan in the 1896 election—set the country on an imperialistic

course, one later approved by Progressives (irrespective of party). Conservatives such as, arguably, Bryan himself at this point tended to defend the particularities of their states, defended the idea of a modest Republic based in self-sufficient family-farming or small-scale ownership of business, and were deeply wary of the nationalizing and imperialistic proclivities of the elite coastal classes. Conservatism, even if imperfectly, was less a program than a disposition and set of varied local practices that eschewed a monolithic and ideological orientation.

It is instructive to consider how the various stances of Progressives came to be occupied by conservatives and thereby how in substance contemporary conservatism now provides succor to liberal ends. Throughout the 20th century, almost every matter of public interest—economic, civic, moral—came under the purview of national authority. Some of these policies were affected through the Congress and the presidency, particularly during the New Deal in regard to economic matters. But in the realm of social policy, a watershed moment occurred in 1973 with the Supreme Court's decision in *Roe v. Wade*, which not only identified a constitutional right to abort but invalidated a variety of state laws.

The demand to fashion a national response, combined with changes in the party system that facilitated that nationalization and sharpened partisan edges, led conservatives to increasingly abandon local and regional affiliations and to regard the national stage as their natural battleground. But not until the 1960s, with the radicalization of the Democratic Party—its friendliness to socialism at home and Communism abroad—did the Republican Party embrace the label of “conservative” and begin to define this “ism” as a distilled ideology. The space they found attractive had been aban-

doned by Progressives. If the Left flirted with the idea of a world state, conservatism would counter with fulsome nationalism. If the Left showed signs of increasing secularity, conservatism would embrace a civic religion that propounded the idea of America as Redeemer Nation. If the Left became disdainful of the American and Western traditions, conservatism would demand loyalty to the idea of America as articulated in the Declaration and rationalist political philosophy. If the Left moved in the direction of economic socialism, conservatism would embrace the free-market ideology of libertarian economics, despite the fact that thinkers like Friedrich Hayek, Milton Friedman, and James Buchanan rejected the label “conservative.” If the Left became increasingly pacifistic, conservatives would respond with a strong assertion of militarism. If the Left's pacifism led it to withdraw from the difficult military challenges presented by tyrants, conservatism would become the Wilsonian defender of a movement toward worldwide democratization.

Conservatism thus came to embody the opposite of Kirk's conservative principles: custom became economic monoculture (i.e., globalization); variety became nationalism; prudence became Kantian jurisprudence; imperfectibility became a religion of secular redemption; community became mobility; and restraint of power became lust for power, particularly control of the national agenda. It lost its moorings by tracking its opponent, and with every victory only fueled the further evisceration of the folkways, traditions, and commitments that an originally conservative disposition arose politically to defend.

On the gravestone of its hero—Ronald Reagan—is an epithet that suggests how far modern conservatism has traveled from its original basis in theo-

logical humility and acknowledgment of original sin: “I know in my heart that man is good.” The substance of Burkean conservatism is ultimately derived from deeply Augustinian sources—the sure knowledge that our existence on earth is not perfectible and that all political societies, like all humans, are flawed and imperfect vessels. The idea that politics can be subject to definitive answers based in ideological or scientific thinking—what de Jouvenel called “the myth of the solution”—lies at the heart of the modern ideologies that conservatism arose to combat. But as it has moved to occupy the ideological space vacated by a leftward-tilting liberalism, it has increasingly adopted aspects of the theological heresies true conservatism rejected.

It has become Manichean in its division of the world into good and evil, sacred and profane. This dualism avoids more complex theology in which evil and sin must be explained not by some external actor but as sown into the nature of postlapsarian human reality. This is a theology that allows for the easy assignment of blame—namely, to agents who are the embodiment of evil—and eschews the sort of self-examination that reveals our own complicity. Recall George W. Bush's Second Inaugural call to eliminate evil from the world. Or listen to conservative talk radio, where even a few minutes reveal a deep and pervasive Manicheanism in which all that is objectionable is the consequence of liberal policies and redemption is only a conservative political victory away.

Further, conservatism has come to reflect a contemporary form of Gnosticism, the heresy based upon a hatred of the given and created world. Conservatives today are as likely as liberals to invoke the goals of “progress” and “growth,” seeing especially in the eco-

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Failure to Launch

Did Robert Gibbs let the cat out of the bag? Mahmoud Ahmadinejad is telling the world that Iran, unable to get fuel rods from the West for its U.S.-built reactor, which

makes medical isotopes, had begun to enrich its own uranium to 20 percent.

From his perch in the West Wing, Gibbs scoffed: "He says many things, and many of them turn out to be untrue. We do not believe they have the capability to enrich to the degree to which they now say they are enriching."

But wait a minute. If Iran does not "have the capability" to enrich to 20 percent for fuel rods, how can Iran enrich to 90 percent for a bomb? What was Gibbs implying?

Is he confirming reports that Iran's centrifuges are breaking down or have been sabotaged? Is he saying that impurities, such as molybdenum, in the feed stock of Iran's centrifuges at Natanz are damaging the centrifuges and contaminating the uranium?

What explains Gibbs's confidence? Perhaps this: according to a report last week by David Albright and Christina Walrond of the Institute for Science and International Security, "Iran's problems in its centrifuge programme are greater than expected. ... Iran is unlikely to deploy enough gas centrifuges to make enriched uranium for commercial nuclear power reactors (Iran's stated nuclear goal) for a long time, if ever, particularly if (UN) sanctions remain in force."

Thus, ISIS is saying Iran cannot make usable fuel for the nuclear power plant it is building, and Gibbs is saying Iran lacks the capability to make fuel rods for its research reactor. Which suggests Iran's vaunted nuclear program is a busted flush.

ISIS insists, however, that Iran may still be able to build a bomb. Yet to do that, Iran would have to divert nearly all of its low-enriched uranium at Natanz, now under UN watch, to a new cascade of centrifuges, enrich that to 90 percent, then explode a nuclear device.

Should Iran do that, however, it would have burned up all its bomb-grade uranium and lack enough low-enriched uranium for a second test. And Tehran would be facing a stunned and shaken Israel with hundreds of nukes and an America with thousands, without a single nuke of its own.

Is Iran running a bluff? And if Gibbs and Albright are right, how long can Iran keep up this pretense of rapid nuclear progress? This brings us to the declaration by Ahmadinejad on the 31st anniversary of the Islamic Revolution, which produced this headline in the *New York Times*: "Iran Boasts of Capacity to Make Bomb Fuel." Accurate as far as it went, this headline was so incomplete as to mislead. For here is what Ahmadinejad said in full: "When we say that we don't build nuclear bombs, it means that we won't do so because we don't believe in having it. ... The Iranian nation is brave enough that if one day we wanted to build nuclear bombs, we would announce it publicly without being afraid of you."

"Right now in Natanz we have the capability to enrich to more than 20 percent and to more than 80 percent, but because we don't need to, we won't do so."

Ahmadinejad sounds like Ronald Reagan: "We believe that not only the Middle East but the whole world should

be free of nuclear weapons, because we see such weapons as inhumane."

Now if, as Albright suggests, Tehran cannot produce fuel for nuclear power plants, and if, as Gibbs suggests, Iran is not capable of enriching to 20 percent for fuel for its research reactor, is Ahmadinejad, in renouncing the bomb, making a virtue of necessity? After all, if you can't build them, denounce them as inhumane.

Last December, the *Times* of London reported it had a secret document, which "intelligence agencies" dated to early 2007, proving that Iran was working on the final component of a "neutron initiator," the trigger for an atom bomb.

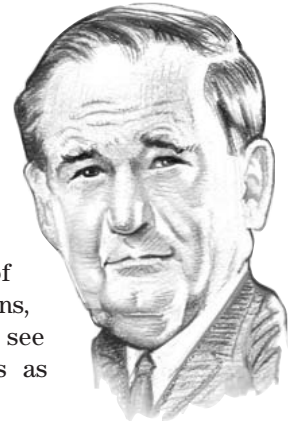
If true, this would leave egg all over the faces of 16 U.S. intelligence agencies whose December 2007 consensus was that Iran stopped seeking a bomb in 2003.

The *Times* credited an "Asian intelligence service" for having ably assisted with its story.

U.S. intelligence, however, has not confirmed the authenticity of the document, and Iran calls it a transparent forgery. When former CIA man Phil Giraldi sounded out ex-colleagues still in the trade, they, too, called the *Times'* document a forgery.

Shades of Saddam seeking yellowcake from Niger.

Are the folks who lied us into war on Iraq, to strip it of weapons it did not have, now trying to lie us into war on Iran, to strip it of weapons it does not have? Maybe the Senate should find out before voting sanctions that will put us on the road to such a war, which would fill up all the empty beds at Walter Reed. ■



Hail to the Chiefs

When the president does it, it isn't illegal.

By John Yoo

Mr. Yoo served from 2001-03 in George W. Bush's Office of Legal Counsel, where he wrote the memos authorizing the use of torture on 9/11 detainees. Yoo is a law professor at the University of California, Berkeley, Torquemada Fellow in Information Studies at the American Enterprise Institute, and author, most recently, of Crisis and Command: A History of Executive Power from George Washington to George W. Bush.

PERHAPS NO ASPECT of George W. Bush's presidency has been more controversial than his expansive use of executive power, an assertiveness that has earned him much condemnation. But have our greatest presidents faced grave national challenges by deferring to Congress at every turn? Have they abrogated all power necessary to surmount various crises, even at the risk of conflict with the judicial and legislative branches?

Far from writing an apologia for the policies of the Bush administration in which I served, I have made a scrupulous study of history to demonstrate the benefits of a strong executive branch. An ideologically broad-based poll of the American Enterprise Institute's staff, trustees, and washroom attendants generated a ranked list of the most highly regarded presidents. Not surprisingly, the executives we tend to consider greatest have not hesitated to declare war, acquire territory, or render suspected terrorists (or individuals with similar-sounding names) to Egyptian enhanced-interrogation chambers, all with the unsung help of heroic attorneys. A few examples will suffice to illustrate this point:

James Monroe

Though Monroe is best remembered for his eponymous doctrine, his presidency (1817-1825) was also marked by the legal controversy attendant to his impulse purchase of Bermuda from the King of France at the amazing low rate of \$19.99. Monroe pounced on the deal without proper congressional authorization, earning him a denunciatory pamphlet written in limerick form by Chief Justice John Marshall, as was the custom at the time.

A constitutional crisis was averted only when it emerged that the King of France was in fact one Slat Banacek, a confidence man who had gained access to the White House through a liaison with a scullery maid and infiltrated First Lady Elizabeth Monroe's regular bridge game. In a further legal wrinkle, Banacek had already sold the mid-Atlantic island to Talleyrand, Mary Wollstonecraft, and John C. Calhoun, resulting in decades of litigation.

But the precedent set by Monroe's far-sighted act continues to reverberate through American history.

Benjamin Harrison

The presidency of Benjamin Harrison (1889-93) furnishes further proof, if more were needed, that a candidate can lose the popular vote yet still turn out to be a great national leader. Harrison is best remembered today for his campaign to root out the grave national security threat of the Mugwumps, dissident Republicans who had crossed party lines to stump for Grover Cleveland in 1884, treachery the likes of

which the nation had not seen since Benedict Arnold.

Harrison ordered that suspected Mugwumps be subjected to enhanced interrogation techniques that were cutting-edge at the time, including tarring, feathering, and marathon readings of the complete works of Harriet Beecher Stowe. (Not for nothing does 24's Jack Bauer have a tattoo of Benjamin Harrison on his buttocks.) Though revisionist historians have creatively argued that the threat was overstated, the "Mugwump Bump" went on to become one of the most popular dance crazes of that most cheerful of decades, the gay old 1890s.

Warren G. Harding

Today, Warren Gamaliel Harding (1921-23) is justly celebrated for his probity, deregulatory zeal, and daring taste in spats. But Harding was also almost single-handedly responsible for foiling a terrorist plot hatched by revanchist followers of Kaiser Wilhelm. With the enhanced interrogation of numerous German-Americans, including the president's mother-in-law, the nascent FBI was able to uncover a plot to rename liberty cabbage "sauerkraut."

This was not uncontroversial, and when a young Felix Frankfurter threatened to take action against the roundup, Harding moved swiftly to have Frankfurter and his law clerks placed in isolation buns and slathered with brown mustard.

Some liberal historians have claimed that Harding went too far, but few deny today that this towering statesman's decisive actions saved his country from reliving the agony of the Teapot Dome Scandal. For this reason, Harding tops the AEI poll as our greatest 20th-century president.

There is a wealth of famous examples of effective unilateral action from other presidencies. Martin Van Buren's incon-

clusive duel with the Queen of Spain. Millard Fillmore's off-code installation of a bathtub in the White House. Richard Nixon's carpet-bombing of Cambodia. Bill Clinton's midnight appropriation of the White House silverware at the end of his second term.

It is to be wondered how these presidents could have achieved any of this had they succumbed to the crippling decentralization of Congress.

In sum, our greatest chief executives have all vigorously exercised the powers of their office to the benefit of the nation—establishing the independence of the executive branch, purchasing Louisiana, winning the Civil War, waterboarding individuals whom mid-price Uzbek bounty hunters have assured us were terrorists—but always under a strict rule of law framework.

As for Barack Obama, he may have learned the lessons of history. In the course of his campaign, he condemned his predecessor's use of enhanced-interrogation procedures and vowed to close the facilities at Guantanamo. Now in office, however, many of his national security policies and his takeover of GM indicate that he too favors expansive presidential powers.

But does Obama truly have what it takes to be an effective chief executive in such parlous times as ours?

Unless he shows that he can discipline the legislative branch, perhaps by waterboarding John Boehner on national television or by forcing recalcitrant members of his own party like Ben Nelson to wear women's undergarments in stress positions, it is clear that America's prestige will erode badly, emboldening terrorists and causing allies to question our commitment to freedom, democracy, and the rule of law. ■

This column was coauthored by Chase Madar, a lawyer in New York.

Even in World War II, the United States did not attempt to assassinate U.S. citizens who went over to the enemy, but that has now changed with President Obama's overseas contingency operations. On Feb. 3, Director of National Intelligence Dennis Blair told the House Intelligence Committee that the United States government has developed procedures for killing American citizens abroad who are "involved" with groups threatening to carry out terrorist acts directed against other Americans. Three U.S. citizens have already been approved by the White House for summary execution as soon as actionable intelligence is developed to enable a pilotless drone's hellfire missiles to do the killing. One is Yemeni cleric Anwar al-Aulaqi; the second is American al-Qaeda member Adam Perlman, who goes under the name Adam Yahye Gadahn; and the third is believed to be a Somali from Minnesota who has joined the al-Qaeda affiliate al-Shabab in the Horn of Africa. Anwar al-Aulaqi, linked in the media to the Christmas underwear bombing and with Major Malik Nadal Hasan, the Fort Hood shooter, has denied any involvement in either incident. Perlman, a propagandist for al-Qaeda, is in Waziristan. Killing these men would involve using military drones to attack targets in three countries with which the United States is not at war.

The Fifth and Sixth Amendments to the U.S. Constitution guarantee a citizen due process and a public trial, as well as the right to confront his accuser. The Obama administration is arguing that these American turncoats do not have constitutional rights because they are not physically in the United States and are actively engaged in planning terrorist acts that the government has the right to disrupt by killing them preemptively. Blair has also explained that there are "defined policies and legal procedures," but as the criteria for inclusion on the kill list are secret, due process is likely limited to the ruminations of a senior bureaucrat and a government lawyer, neither of whom has a mandate to protect the rights of the suspect. Furthermore, Blair's use of the word "involved" suggests that the definition of terrorist activity might be somewhat elastic. The result is that secret information used to make a secret decision can very definitely get you killed in the Obama White House's Brave New World. It will also kill many of your friends and family, as the hellfire missiles are notorious for their infliction of collateral damage.

Killing dissident citizens without due process is not a unique practice. Libyans, Iranians, and Soviets all did it in the 1980s and 1990s. But it is unusual in a liberal democracy where there are restraints on depriving a citizen of his life. The odd thing is that no one who matters seems too disturbed. No congressional committee protested, the *New York Times* only ran a short discussion thread on its online opinion page, and the *Washington Post* relegated the story to page 3 without any follow-up.

Philip Giraldi, a former CIA Officer, is a fellow with the American Conservative Defense Alliance.

Third World War

The real showdown between Christians and Muslims isn't in the Mideast.

By Philip Jenkins

NOBODY IS SURE how it started. Perhaps Christian activists sent text messages warning that Muslims were trying to poison them. Maybe Muslims tried to storm a church. Whatever the cause, the consequence this past January was mayhem for the Nigerian city of Jos. Muslim-Christian rioting killed up to 500 people before the government intervened with its customary heavy hand.

The most striking point about these battles was that nobody found them striking. In Jos, as in countless other regions across Africa and Asia, violence between Christians and Muslims can erupt at any time, with the potential to detonate riots, civil wars, and persecutions. While these events are poorly reported in the West, they matter profoundly. All the attention in the Global War on Terror focuses on regions in which the U.S. is engaged militarily, but another war is raging across whole continents, one that will ultimately shape the strategic future. Uncomfortably for American policymakers, it is a war of religions and beliefs—a battle not for hearts and minds but for souls.

This is not to argue for an irreconcilable Clash of Civilizations, still less a struggle between Christian good and Muslim evil. In any African country divided between the two faiths—and that includes most lands south of the Sahara—day-to-day interfaith relations are remarkably good. Many families are amicably divided between Christians and Muslims and take great care to avoid sources of conflict. Business or political meetings commonly begin with prayers,

and it is no great matter whether a pastor or a *mullah* leads them.

Yet over the past century, the spread of new religious forms worldwide has created the potential for violence wherever a surging Christianity meets an unyielding Islam. Riots such as those in Jos are one result; terrorism is another. Generally, Muslims have been the aggressors in recent conflicts, but Christians have their own sectarian mobs and militias.

However blame is apportioned, the two faiths have been at daggers drawn, often literally, for decades. As Eliza Griswold discusses in her forthcoming book, *The Tenth Parallel*, you can trace the fault by following the latitude line of ten degrees North. (Jos, conveniently, stands almost exactly at ten degrees.) A tectonic plate of religious and cultural confrontation runs across West and Northwest Africa, through Southeast Asia, Indonesia, and the Philippines. A decade ago, Indonesia witnessed some of the worst fighting, as Muslim militias launched bloody assaults on that nation's Christian minority, some 25 million strong. For decades, the overwhelmingly Christian Philippines has suffered constant insurgency from a ruthless armed movement concentrated in the Muslim south. Mob attacks and pogroms have raged in Malaysia. In Africa, the Sudan is probably the best-known theater of mass martyrdom, while Nigeria remains deeply polarized. And that is not to mention ongoing killings in countries like Uganda and Kenya.

Humanitarian concerns apart, there are plenty of reasons for the West to be deeply worried about these conflicts. Nigeria has almost 160 million people and by 2050 is expected to have 300 million, making it one of the world's most populous nations. If it ever escapes from its present political horrors, it will be the obvious leader of sub-Saharan Africa. Nigeria also matters enormously in terms of natural resources. It is the third largest source of U.S. crude-oil imports, ahead of Saudi Arabia. Other up-and-coming oil suppliers in West and Central Africa are also among the religiously divided nations. Meanwhile Indonesia, with 240 million people, is already a population giant, and unlike Nigeria, it seems set for serious economic development in the coming decade.

If such massive countries ever became monolithically Muslim, that would be significant enough for the West, especially because these states wield such cultural influence over their neighbors. But if they fell into the hands of a radical form of Wahhabi or Salafist Islam, that would be an epochal catastrophe. Conversely, imagine a world in which Christians predominated in these influential Global South nations. That would decisively shift the world's balance of forces in pro-Western directions.

The relationship between Christianity and Islam poses a challenge for at least half of the 20 nations expected to have the world's largest populations by 2050. By present projections, three of these future mega-states—Nigeria, Ethiopia, and Tanzania—will be almost equally

divided between the two faiths. In several others, like the Congo, the Philippines, Russia, and Uganda, predominantly Christian nations will have Muslim minorities of 10 percent or more. Mainly Muslim states will coexist with comparable Christian sub-populations in Indonesia, Egypt, and the Sudan. In all of these places, if relations between the faiths do not improve over the next 40 years, prospects for civil order are terrifying. The world's roster of failed states would have several new members.

Why the hostility? What are Christians and Muslims fighting about in Nigeria and Malaysia, Uganda and the Philippines? Western readers will think back to Samuel Huntington's *Clash of Civilizations*, a richly provocative idea. But the notion of a world divided among vast religious-cultural blocs assumes that these units remain fairly constant, so that tension occurs only along their periphery. Yet cultural blocs change dramatically within their borders as well, and we are presently living through a dizzying era of shifting boundaries.

Look at those rapidly growing countries and think of how these burgeoning Christian heartlands might have struck an observer in 1914. Why are Christians so numerous in Africa and Asia? Did the past century witness a global religious revolution? The answer, of course, is yes, however dimly Westerners may be aware of it. Muslims have certainly seen the trend. One factor driving Islamic militancy in many nations is the sense that Christianity is growing. Outside of the West, evangelism and conversion are two of the most sensitive issues in the modern world.

Christianity, which a century ago was overwhelmingly the religion of Europe and the Americas, has undertaken a historic advance into Africa and Asia. In 1900, Africa had just 10 million Christians, representing around 10 percent of the continental population. By 2000, that

figure had swollen to over 360 million, or 46 percent of the population. Over the course of the 20th century, millions of Africans transferred their allegiance from traditional primal faiths to one of the two great world religions, Christianity or Islam—but they demonstrated an overwhelming preference for the former. Around 40 percent of Africa's population became Christian, compared to just 10 percent who chose Islam. As Muslims had earlier far outnumbered Christians, the result was to transform a massive Muslim majority into a reasonably equal confessional balance. Africa today is about 47 percent Christian, 45 percent Muslim, and some 8 percent followers of primal religions.

To appreciate this transformation, consider Nigeria. In 1900, the lands that would become that nation were about 28 percent Muslim and 1 percent Christian. Confident in their numbers, Muslims did not need even to think about Christians as rivals. For Muslims, the

where some polls in recent years have suggested an outright Christian majority. (More conservative estimates register around 46 percent.) Even nonpolitical Muslims worry: might their grandchildren be kaffirs? Worse, these newer Christians are not like the minority communities familiar in a Middle Eastern context, groups like the Egyptian Copts, who of necessity were politically quietist: the new African believers are dynamic and expansionist. The most successful follow energetic Pentecostal and evangelical forms of faith rather than the sober liturgical habits of older groupings.

The new believers draw on Western, and specifically American, forms of evangelism, marketing their faith through videos and DVDs. They organize crusades and mass meetings for prayer and healing that can draw 2 million believers together in a single venue. For nervous Muslims, the Christian threat was epitomized by the legendary "Jesus" video,

CHRISTIANITY, OVERWHELMINGLY THE RELIGION OF EUROPE AND THE AMERICAS, HAS UNDERTAKEN A HISTORIC ADVANCE INTO AFRICA AND ASIA.

pagan population represented an inferior state of being, peoples to be ruled and, often, enslaved. One day in the future, the heathens might join the modern religious world, but it would be the world of Islam. But then things went wrong. By 1970, Muslims had increased their share of the population to 45 percent. But that 1 percent Christian minority had expanded incredibly, also to 45 percent. A land that seemed firmly under Muslim hegemony was suddenly split down the middle.

The question now was just how much further Christian numbers could grow. If you extrapolate recent Christian growth into the near future, no Muslim majority seems safe, even in a place like Nigeria,

originally a British film biography produced in 1979, but subsequently promoted around the world. As a weapon of mass instruction, it has few equals. Christians in Jos or Jakarta would approach Muslims and offer to show them a really interesting film about the prophet Jesus. Many accepted the invitation, and some then decided to follow the Christian way rather than the path of Islam.

Christianity also attracted independent-minded women. In traditional societies, conversion occurred when the head of a clan or family accepted a new religion and brought his kin with him. Now, when a patriarch accepted Islam, youngsters demurred, preferring to seek personal salvation in Christianity. And

inconceivably, women even refused to accept arranged marriages to suitable Muslim men. Religious splits became family feuds, escalating the potential for malice and retaliation.

Few Asian countries have seen anything like the Christian growth that characterizes Africa, but here, too, religious change generates social tensions. In lands like Indonesia and Malaysia, Christianity has been associated above all with minority communities, especially the Chinese, whom majority Muslim groups hate and fear for being rich, clannish, and arrogant. Economic crises, such as the Asian financial crash of 1997-98, bring ethnic conflicts, which bear a religious coloring.

In different societies, then, booming Christianity came to be associated with a variety of perils: the breakup of traditional communities, individualism, women's independence, and everything associated with "the West"—libertarianism, sexual explicitness, and cultural aggression. When the Pentecostal movement reached full force, all these trends began to look like a juggernaut that might overwhelm familiar cultures. From an Islamic viewpoint, these things might be troubling enough if they were happening on the traditional Muslim-Christian frontier—say in the Mediterranean—but suddenly Christian expansion was accelerating in what should have been dependable Muslim territory.

This was the package of nightmares that faced Muslim communities from the 1970s onward, at exactly the time that a new countermovement, quite as radical in its own way, emerged from the Middle East. The key date was 1979, the year of the Iranian Revolution, but also of the radical coup against the Grand Mosque in Mecca. The Saudi regime survived that assault but in a chastened mood. Anxious to prevent a repeat performance, the Saudis made their devil's bargain with the Islamists: go and do

what you like around the world, and we will bankroll you, but stay out of our own beloved kingdom. That was the point at which Gulf oil money began rolling around the Muslim world, funding mosques and madrassas following the hardest of Islamist lines. By the end of 1979, the Soviet Union had invaded Afghanistan, sparking a war that would become a vehicle for training jihadis worldwide.

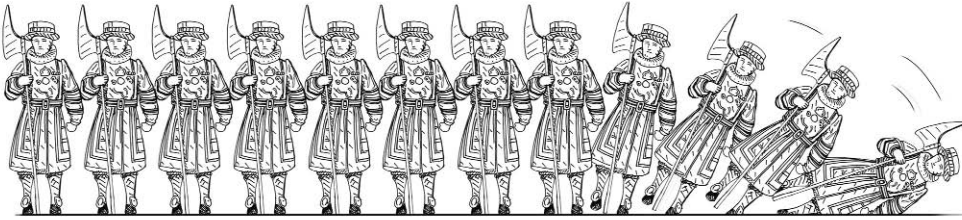
The outcome was a new and highly militant form of Islam, impatient with old-style moderate forms of faith and fanatically opposed to Christian incursions into continents seen as Muslim realms. For these militants, the growth of Christianity was proof of the failure of the old Muslim regimes. In the words of radical theorist Sayyid Qutb, these regimes had shown themselves infidels at heart, and it was up to true Muslims to condemn them as such (*takfir*) and remove themselves spiritually (make *hijra*) to a new and purer activism. In 1989, a revolutionary Islamist regime took power in the Sudan. The same year, at Abuja in Nigeria, a conference on Islam in Africa outlined a program for successful Islamization. That event entered Christian folklore, and one does not have to travel far on the continent to hear claims of all manner of secret plans to destroy Christianity across Africa and create a caliphate. If Islamists denounce the Christians as tools of America, Christians everywhere see the hand of Riyadh.

In many countries, Islamist sects formed militias, some affiliated with the nascent al-Qaeda. In 1993, for instance, Indonesian extremists formed the terrorist organization Jemaah Islamiyah, which would be responsible for the 2002 bombings that killed 200 in Bali. One of the deadliest anti-Christian groups in West Africa has been the al-Qaeda-linked "Nigerian Taliban," known to themselves as the *muhajiroun*—those who make *hijra*.

When we see interfaith battles in Africa or Asia, we are generally not witnessing activism by al-Qaeda militants directed from some secret terrorist mission control, but we do find movements driven by exactly the same grievances that motivate bin Laden's associates—above all, we see the same central fear of Christian expansion. For Muslims, whether political dissidents or actual Islamists, the world is evidently engaged in a culture war, a war of faiths, and groups like al-Qaeda are only one small and sensationalized portion of that. Christians likewise know the stakes. Educated African believers look back with trepidation at the great Christian churches that flourished in the northern regions of the continent 1,500 years ago, churches that would be snuffed out under Islamic rule. They are determined not to let that disaster be repeated.

This culture clash, so crucial to the fate of whole continents, has not impinged on the American consciousness. Stunningly, the crying need for interfaith peace in Africa and Asia featured not at all in Barack Obama's much-touted speech in Cairo last June. Of course, American options are limited. The more that Western nations try to interfere directly in defense of Christians, the easier it is for Muslims to portray their enemies as imperialist agents. That is not a counsel of despair. American administrations can achieve something by pressuring allegedly friendly regimes like the Saudis to stop sponsoring anti-Christian propaganda across the Global South. But ultimately, resolving this conflict will depend on Africans and Asians themselves—if only Washington and Riyadh can refrain from pouring fuel on the hostilities. ■

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Switch Hitching

Cavil as we may—and must—Christopher Hitchens is an extraordinarily gifted polemicist and was once great fun. Much of his stuff from the cheesy days of Thatcher

and Reagan would sit happily in this magazine today. But you can't stop progress. Having once been a decent Marxist, Hitchens is now a podgy (but still rather pretty) Captain America, convinced that the Great Republic is the last best hope of revolution. Who would have thought in the 1980s that the day would come when he would be on the same side as Charles Krauthammer and William Kristol, not to say Norman Podhoretz and Michael Novak? Who'd have thought that this devout atheist would become a shill for a born-again Republican president?

Who, for that matter, would have thought that he'd turn on Gore Vidal? In February's *Vanity Fair*, Hitchens did quite a bit of damage to the former Sage of Ravello, as any kid of 60 might when taking a rawhide whip to a crippled 84-year-old war veteran. There were obviously Oedipal issues here, and some of us reflected that what unites these two men (hatred of Christianity) is more significant than what divides them (whether or not to nuke Tehran). Still, when it comes to the global democratic revolution and the War on Terror, Vidal is on the side of the angels. Hitchens is on the side of Leon Trotsky and Dick Cheney.

Our man in Washington is now the hammer of the terrorists. Twenty years ago, he did not even believe in terrorism. It had been invented, he said in an essay for *Harper's* in 1986, to spread fear among the people, and if we weren't careful, it might one day lead to war. Here's how he saw it then: "A great power and a purportedly educated and democratic

intelligentsia have allowed themselves to be 'terrorized'. ... Stalin was a terrorist, Mao was a terrorist, Arabs are terrorists; Europeans are soft on terrorism; Latins are riddled with it. Whisk, whisk ... and there goes history, there goes inquiry, there goes proportion. All is terror. The best that can be said for this method is that it economizes on thought. You simply unveil it like Medusa's head and turn all discussion into stone."

Now, of course, Hitchens is on permanent terror alert. When news came on Christmas Day that a young Nigerian had allegedly set fire to his underpants on Flight 253, Hitchens did not for a moment think that was something anyone might do if he'd just heard that he was about to land in Detroit, but instead started to sound like a goon with an education: "We had better get used to being the civilians who are under a relentless and planned assault from the pledged supporters of a wicked theocratic ideology," he wrote in *Slate*.

It got worse: "[The terrorists] are already in our suburbs and even in our military. We can expect to take casualties. The battle will go on for the rest of our lives. ... Those who don't get the point prefer to whine about 'endless war,' accidentally speaking the truth about something of which the attempted Christmas bombing over Michigan was only a foretaste. While we fumble with bureaucracy and euphemism, they are flying high."

There is more than a hint here that only right-minded people have the courage to tell it like it is. Nineteen years

ago, in the *London Review of Books*, Hitchens wrote about another group of right-minded people who were brave enough to speak their minds—"Bertorelli's Blackshirts." Bertorelli's is a restaurant in Soho and the soi-disant Blackshirts were a gang of thinkers—Patrick Cosgrave, Kingsley Amis, Bernard Levin, Robert Conquest, Russell Lewis—who liked to believe that Britain in the 1970s was a country in which it was dangerous to hold conservative opinions.

Here was the drill, as described by Hitchens: "...a sample sally might begin: 'I know its unfashionable to say this' and go on to propose that, say, Hans Eysenck was on to something. Someone would lift a riskily brimming bumper and cry: 'Down with Oxfam!' Someone else might recommend a piece of samizdat from *Encounter*. And so the afternoon wore on agreeably enough, with daring satirical calls for South African port, Chilean wine, and so forth."

That's perfect. It was exactly like that in the 1970s. In the Kings and Keys, a Fleet Street pub used by *Daily Telegraph* journalists and other misfits, we liked to cry: "Compassion is the curse of the English middle classes" or (putting on a John Wayne accent) "Moderation is for ... moderates" or (borrowing from America) "You know what happens to middle-of-the-roaders? They get knocked down by trucks."

How we laughed at our daring. How we cringe in shame now. If it had taken courage to be a conservative in the 1970s, Margaret Thatcher would never have become prime minister.

Some people say that Hitchens himself is now a conservative. That is absurd. But he might one day make a great police chief. ■

Haitian-Building

From the halls of Montezuma to the shores of Port-au-Prince

By Roger D. McGrath

The great rule of conduct for us in regard to foreign nations is, in extending our commercial relations to have with them as little *political* connection as possible.

—George Washington,
Farewell Address

THE MARINES HAVE LANDED in Haiti—again. They’ve been there many times before, not in the aftermath of an earthquake, but in the chaos caused by warring factions and rulers destroying infrastructure and terrorizing the population. These interventions cost American taxpayers millions and the Marines blood and lives. In the long run, they proved entirely futile, though they did add to the heroic lore of the Corps. The three most decorated Marines in history all served tours in Haiti, with two of them earning the Medal of Honor there.

Born in revolutionary fervor, Haiti has traditionally called itself a republic, but its history has been marked by strongmen anointing themselves Emperor for Life or ruling like one while observing the title of president. Coups and assassinations have been the surest path to power. From 1908 to 1915, the Haitian government changed hands seven times, with four presidents dying violently and the other three fleeing the country. Men were tortured and mutilated and women raped. Voodoo incantations guided the masses. The country resembled nothing else in the Western Hemisphere.

During this period, American companies doing business in Haiti suffered losses, and their claims against the government mounted. Roger Farnham, a

principal of the National Railway, tangled with the government over its refusal to pay for several sections of badly constructed track. Farnham was also vice president of the National City Bank of New York City and of the Banque Nationale in Haiti. Moreover, he was chief adviser to the Wilson administration on Haiti and influenced, if not determined, State Department policy toward the country.

The result: a graphic demonstration of gunboat diplomacy. In December 1914, the USS *Machias* steamed into the harbor at Port-au-Prince and landed a party of U.S. Marines. With 1903 Springfield slung over their shoulders and Colt .45 semi-automatic pistols on their hips, they removed \$500,000 in Haitian government funds from the vault of the Banque Nationale and carried the cash to the *Machias*. The money was then transported to NYC and deposited at the National City Bank. Back in Haiti, the Banque Nationale lowered the French flag that had flown over its headquarters and raised the Stars and Stripes.

Early in 1915, the State Department sent two special commissions to Haiti in an attempt to negotiate an American receivership, which would include U.S. control of customs. Such an arrangement might have brought some measure of stability, but the Haitian government, which had a typically tenuous hold on power, knew it would be inviting a coup d’etat if it compromised national sovereignty. By the spring of 1915, the State Department ruled the situation in Haiti hopeless, deeming the Haitians incapable of governing themselves. President Wilson agreed. His advisers began laying

the groundwork for military intervention.

Meanwhile, the Haitians lived down to the State Department and President Wilson’s low opinion of them. Late in February, Jean Vilbrun Guillaume Sam ascended the presidency in a coup. He suppressed other aspirants to office, jailing and torturing hundreds of them. On July 27, he had nearly 200 political enemies executed, including former president Oreste Zamor.

As news of the executions spread, riots erupted. Sam fled to the French embassy and was given asylum. Undeterred by diplomatic niceties, a mob stormed the embassy, found Sam hiding in a bathroom, and beat him to death. His body was dragged into the street and dismembered and disemboweled. The various body parts were then paraded through the streets of Port-au-Prince while onlookers hooted and looted.

The next day, the Marines landed. The Wilson administration said they were needed to protect American lives in the wake of Sam’s death and the collapse of his government. But the Marines had been dispatched long before the assassination and had been waiting on board the USS *Washington* in the bay at Port-au-Prince. They were there to protect American business interests whether or not Sam remained in office. With World War I raging in Europe, there were also worries about possible German threats to the Panama Canal should a future revolutionary Haitian government open its ports to the Kaiser’s ships and submarines.

By midmorning on July 28, some 300 Leathernecks and several dozen sailors had come ashore. They were soon rein-

forced by more Marines from Guantanamo Bay and later from Philadelphia, until their numbers reached 2,000. "The force being sent to Haiti," declared the *New York Times*, "is much larger than is necessary for mere protection of foreign interests." This would be an occupation.

From shipboard, the Marines thought Haiti looked like a tropical paradise and believed the Haitians would welcome them as guarantors of safety and security. Once on land, they were disabused of such notions. "It hurt," remarked Private Faustin Wirkus. "It stunk. Fairyland had turned into a pigsty. More than that, we were not welcome. We could feel it as distinctly as we could smell the rot along the gutters. ... In the street were piles of evil-smelling offal. The stench hung over everything." Marines patrolling the streets of Port-au-Prince at night avoided walking under second-story windows for risk of having a chamber pot emptied on them.

Military personnel took control of all the coastal cities and ports and attempted to regularize the collection of customs. Looking through government records they found that graft was simply standard operating procedure. To change such practices, they would have to take control away from the Haitians and rule, as one Marine put it, like "the Great White Father."

But there was trouble brewing in the hills, where thousands of bandits and guerrillas had fled. The Marines, led by Maj. Smedley Butler and Gunnery Sgt. Dan Daly, gave chase. Fighting these *cacos* was not nearly as difficult as tracking them down. If they didn't have great numerical superiority, they would rarely fight. Battles usually only occurred when Marine patrols surprised large encampments or stumbled into an ambush.

On Oct. 24, 1915, Major Butler and Gunny Daly led a mounted patrol of three dozen Marines across a river in a deep ravine en route to the old French

outpost Fort Dipitie, reputed to be a *cacos* stronghold. Some 400 *cacos* opened fire, killing a dozen of the Marine horses and a mule carrying the patrol's machine gun. Butler and Daly led their men to high ground, established a tight defensive perimeter, and kept the *cacos* at bay with accurate rifle fire.

When the night turned pitch black, Daly went back for the machine gun, which had sunk into the river along with the dead mule. He slipped by most of the *cacos*, but had to silently knife three. Then he repeatedly dove into the water in the darkness until he located the mule. Unstrapping the machine gun and its ammunition, Daly hoisted the 100-pound load on his 5'6", 42-year-old frame and crept back through the *cacos*. At dawn, Butler and Daly led the Marine attack on Fort Dipitie, driving several hundred *cacos* from the fort and killing 75 of them. Daly would be awarded his second Medal of Honor.

A month later, it was Butler's turn. He led some 90 Marines to Fort Riviere, situated on the top of 4,000-foot-high Montagne Noire. Protected by cliffs on three sides, the one-time French fort was approachable only from the front. Along the west wall, Butler discovered a small drainage culvert just big enough for a man to get through. He decided that he and two others would go first and create a diversion, allowing his main body of troops to follow.

Crawling stealthily, Butler, a sergeant, and a private emerged from the culvert inside the fort, ran to another position, and began a withering fire that cut down confused *cacos* by the twos and threes. They engaged some of the guerrillas hand-to-hand, bludgeoning them with rifle butts and eviscerating them with bayonets. With the *cacos* diverted, the rest of Butler's men were able to exit the culvert without being immediately gunned down. The battle lasted only 10 minutes and left 51 *cacos* dead. Butler

and the two enlisted men who had accompanied him were awarded the Medal of Honor. He joined Daly as only the second Marine to receive our nation's highest decoration twice.

The Haitian-American Treaty, negotiated during the fall of 1915, stipulated that the U.S. would organize and provide officers for a security force, the Gendarmerie. In December, Major Butler became the force's first commander and was given the rank of major general. Marine privates became second lieutenants in the Gendarmerie, corporals first lieutenants, and so forth. The Marines were paid by the U.S. according to their rank in the Corps and by the Haitian government according to their rank in the Gendarmerie. The double pay helped compensate for dangerous and malaria-wracked duty, including months in the mountains chasing bandits. One of those Marines, a private become lieutenant in the Gendarmerie, would, like Butler and Daly, become a Marine legend—Lewis "Chesty" Puller.

The United States and the Marines would stay in Haiti until 1934, pouring millions of dollars into the country—building harbors, bridges, roads, schools, and hospitals, suppressing insurrections, and protecting American business. But within a few years of the Marines leaving, factions and strongmen were at it again. Moreover, a border war erupted with the Dominican Republic. Smedley Butler, who retired from the Corps in 1931 as a major general and the Marines' most decorated warrior, remarked with disgust that ultimately the Marines' mission resulted in not much more than making Haiti "a decent place for the National City Bank boys to collect revenues." ■

Roger D. McGrath is a historian in California and the author of Gunfighters, Highwaymen, and Vigilantes.

Speak No Evil

An al-Qaeda PR man tests America's constitutional commitment to freedom of speech.

By Kelley Beaucar Vlahos

IT'S DISORIENTING to sit across from a pair of bright, bespectacled military attorneys a metro stop away from the Pentagon talking about freeing a convicted terrorist from a life sentence. Discussions about "fundamental rights" extending to noncitizens, government overreach in the War on Terror, and the slippery slope of the Military Commissions Act—this was more like interviewing ACLU lawyers, long-haired, indignant, and ready to be jailed defending their client.

But here were two clean-cut Catholic guys who claim they are inspired by the perspicacity of the Founding Fathers and a rule of law stronger than any post-9/11 race to rid the world of Islamist evil-doers. They say their current case has as much to do with the rights of American citizens as it does with one long-term resident of Guantanamo Bay.

Army Major Todd Pierce, a Judge Advocate General reservist, and Michel Paradis, a civilian lawyer, serve on a team for the Defense Counsel of the Court of Military Commission Review. They are helping to build the appeal for Ali Hamza al-Bahlul, an al-Qaeda media man and Osama bin Laden's personal secretary, who was convicted by a military tribunal in 2008.

His work as a propagandist—and, these attorneys suspect, his loutish behavior at trial: waving a poem praising the 9/11 attacks didn't help his cause—landed al-Bahlul the heaviest sentence of the three men successfully

prosecuted under the Military Commissions Act to date. Still, they believe his conviction violated the First Amendment.

Come again?

These lawyers couldn't have picked a more repellent client. Not only is al-Bahlul a noncitizen, he admits to joining al-Qaeda, swearing allegiance to bin Laden, and writing speeches for the terror mastermind. He allegedly bunked with eventual 9/11 hijackers and reportedly provided a radio receiver to bin Laden to listen to the aftermath of 9/11 via satellite. During his trial, he played with a paper airplane. He vows to continue the fight.

This appears to be an open-and-shut case, but defense attorneys point out that prosecutors could never tie al-Bahlul—who was captured and first indicted in 2004—to a single violent act against coalition forces. Nevertheless, he was charged with conspiracy, material support for terrorism, and solicitation to commit murder.

Defense attorneys have zeroed in on the solicitation charge, saying it hinged on a single recruitment video al-Bahlul produced, "State of the Ummah." They argue that it was never proved that the video was anything more than an abomination to its American viewers, at least the ones who were brought in to testify during al-Bahlul's sentencing. The prosecution offered no evidence that the video called for, or resulted in, a specific act of murder.

"There is little doubt that Mr. Al-Bahlul is not a sympathetic defendant," read the written appeal, filed with the Military Commission Review last September. The solicitation charge, however, "conflates offensive behavior with criminal behavior. As offensive as it may be, *State of the Ummah* is speech that falls within the core protections of the First Amendment."

If this isn't acknowledged, the defense claims, the U.S. government could very well round up any foreigner in the Global War on Terror—for the battlefield is indeed global—and prosecute him for things he has said, written, or produced. If it stands, the appeal states, the conviction of al-Bahlul on solicitation charges could even pave the way for domestic politicians to start suing foreign journalists for libel. It would create a "chilling effect" on Americans' access to foreign information, including political propaganda, which is currently protected by lower court rulings.

Al-Bahlul's film "provides a valuable window into the anxieties and grievances of a substantial number of Muslims inside and outside the United States," the defense wrote. Critics tell *TAC* that censoring the propaganda's creator makes the U.S. government no better than China, deciding for its people what they can read on the Internet. ("State of the Ummah" is, however, still available via YouTube.)

In effect, the First Amendment not only protects al-Bahlul's speech but

Americans' access to it. According to the defense, "At a minimum [open access to the video] invites public condemnation and a reaffirmation of the core values it ostensibly seeks to undermine. ... The courts must abide by the First Amendment, in particular, because its protection of speech is not simply, or even primarily, for the benefit of the defendant. It is for society at large."

Pierce said every American should put al-Bahlul's ugliness aside and concentrate on the implications of his case: "[This] is a conservative issue. It's about speech and not having 'preferred speakers' and the government not having a monopoly on speech." Pressing on, he suggests that citizens take special note of what happens here: if the rule of law breaks down for noncitizens, what is to stop an ambitious Congress and "a few revisions in the law" from prosecuting unsavory speech by American activists alleged by military courts to be soliciting terrorism? U.S. citizens can already be detained under the Military Commissions Act as unlawful enemy combatants if the government suspects they have aided the Taliban or al-Qaeda.

It is the speech, not the speaker, that is at issue here. The defense is not claiming that nonresident aliens have constitutional rights per se, but that the First Amendment—"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech"—prevents the government from prosecuting speech in a congressionally authorized court of law on U.S. territory, even from unlawful enemy combatants like al-Bahlul.

"If you have been detained in U.S. territory for nine years, brought into a U.S. court and prosecuted—for the government to say we can prosecute him under our laws but at the same time say he does not have the rights given to us by

those laws. ... you cannot have it both ways. If you are going to invoke the moral authority of the U.S., you cannot pick and choose," Paradis says. He notes that he and Pierce speak for themselves, not for al-Bahlul, who continues to boycott his military counsel. The defense team is thus "assisting" the jailed Yemeni's case, but not officially representing him in public.

This makes the lawyers' personal efforts even more extraordinary. Al-Bahlul was initially charged with a single count of conspiracy before the original military commission instituted by the Bush administration in 2002. He requested self-representation, and the judge at the time obliged. After the Supreme Court deemed the Bush com-

"I LOVE THIS COUNTRY AND THE RULE OF LAW, AND I HATE TO SEE IT DESTROYED FOR NOTHING," FEIN TOLD TAC, NOTING THAT AL-BAHLUL "DIDN'T KILL ANYBODY, HE MADE A VIDEO."

missions illegal, and Congress passed a new Military Commission Act in 2006, at his second trial al-Bahlul was indicted on fresh charges, and the new judge rejected his request to represent himself, compelling him to accept military counsel.

But his appointed attorney, Air Force Maj. David Frakt, honored his client's request and sat mute during the trial. Frakt has since spoken publicly in al-Bahlul's defense and has been highly critical of the MCA, going so far as to question whether conspiracy and material support for terrorism are even viable war crimes.

Meanwhile, Pierce took leave of his family and professional life in Minnesota to come to Washington last year to volunteer on the appeal. The appeals are automatic, so defense lawyers need not be so earnest. But to people like Pierce,

this goes beyond al-Bahlul: "I see the Military Commissions Act [undermining] the authority of the Constitution."

The defense team has informally engaged Bruce Fein, a lawyer, constitutional scholar, and former Reagan administration justice official who has had a series of breaks with Republicans in recent years, calling for the impeachment of President George W. Bush over the domestic wiretapping program and Bush's 750 signing statements.

"I love this country and the rule of law, and I hate to see it destroyed for nothing," Fein told TAC, noting that al-Bahlul "didn't kill anybody, he made a video." He said he supports the First Amendment approach in al-Bahlul's case and may get involved in a "more

formal way" should it advance. If the appeal under the Court of Military Commissions Review fails, it will move to the D.C. Circuit Court of Appeals. From there, lawyers hope to take it all the way to the Supreme Court.

Fein said at the heart of the First Amendment defense is the 30-year-old *Brandenburg v. Ohio* decision, in which the Supreme Court ruled that the state could not prohibit inflammatory speech unless it incites or produces "imminent lawlessness." While "State of the Ummah" features gruesome footage of Israeli violence against Muslims in the Palestinian territories and children ostensibly hurt by U.S. sanctions on Iraq, juxtaposed with rotund Saudi princes and lengthy dissertations by bin Laden, the defense argues that it does not rise to the level of inciting a specific action like an attack or riot. Rather, it

constitutes the more “general advocacy” of *jihad*, political speech the Supreme Court says the First Amendment protects, like it or not.

“There has to be an imminent likelihood that there will be violence. Where is the evidence that anyone acted on this video to go out and kill an American?” asks Fein, who suggests the government is hurting its ability to fight terrorism through such prosecutions. “Our greatest strength is the rule of law. Applying the rule of law even-handedly will dry up the recruits [or terrorism].”

Not surprisingly, the prosecution is unimpressed with this line of reasoning. After oral arguments in early February, Navy Capt. Edward White said, “Our position was that, as an enemy combatant waging war against the United States from abroad, [al-Bahlul] does not have First Amendment rights. He crossed the line into criminality, soliciting other people—inducing, enticing, encouraging, persuading them—to commit war crimes.” Calls to the Office of Military Commission for further comment went unreturned.

Scott Silliman, professor and director of the Center on Law, Ethics, and National Security at Duke University, told *TAC* that he, too, considers the First Amendment argument weak. “[The Constitution] does not protect everyone in the world,” he says. He points out that members of the U.S. military are limited in speech everyday. In fact, soldier Marc Hall was jailed in December for recording a rap song criticizing stop-loss. The military deemed his song a “communications threat.”

Silliman doesn’t agree that if al-Bahlul’s conviction stands, the military could begin targeting foreign journalists or anyone picked up on the global battlefield espousing offensive speech: “I would argue that the First Amendment does not extend to a nonresident alien, period.”

But this wouldn’t be the first time constitutional rights were afforded to nonresidents. In 2008, the Supreme Court ruled 5-4 that in creating the MCA in 2006, Congress had illegally suspended habeas corpus for noncitizen detainees. Writing for the majority, Justice Anthony Kennedy said that the president and Congress do not have “the power to switch the constitution on or off at will.”

Meanwhile, critics like British writer Andy Worthington, who wrote “The Guantanamo Files” and, if you believe the defense’s admonitions, could be detained someday for his sustained written and verbal attacks on U.S. detention policies, say there is growing evidence that the government is already considering a certain kind of speech “militant activity.”

“What’s kind of been submerged here is these recidivism charges coming out,” Worthington tells *TAC*. “It’s worth examining.” As early as 2007, the Pentagon was not only counting ex-prisoners

caught with guns and IEDs in its running total of so-called recidivists, but those with pens and video cameras, too. According to one of its own press releases listing “former Guantanamo detainees who have returned to the fight,” the government cited among those taking part in “anti-coalition activities” three UK-based Muslims who produced a film about their experiences in prison at Gitmo and another former detainee who wrote a critical op-ed for the *New York Times* from his new home in Albania.

Worthington commends the free-speech challenge as laudable, but acknowledges it will be a difficult case to make in a military court. “I have to say it is an ingenious argument, but I’m not entirely sure they will get anywhere with it. It remains to be seen.” ■

Kelley Beaucar Vlahos is a reporter in the Washington, D.C. area.

Mindless Missiles

The Pentagon’s drone budget is on autopilot.

By Winslow T. Wheeler and Pierre M. Sprey

TODAY’S PENTAGON is led by its most widely respected secretary of defense in decades, one more in control and feared by the generals than any since the much-hated Robert McNamara. One would hope that with this stature, Robert Gates is nurturing a plan to reverse the decay afflicting our military forces. Think again. The only plan will make things worse.

It was revealed in early February in an obscure, mostly ignored document that accompanied Secretary Gates’s new defense budget—the “Aircraft Invest-

ment Plan, Fiscal Years (FY) 2011-2040.” Though the Pentagon has never been able to stick to even the second year of any of its innumerable future year plans, it is confidently laying out a roadmap for the next three decades for all aircraft in the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps.

Contrary to the invective that politicians and their think-tank cronies hurl against the Obama administration, this new plan does not ruin America’s air power with less money, but with more. It promotes some of the most gold-plated, mindlessly ineffective weapons

seen since the Imperial Japanese Navy's mega-battleships were dispatched to the bottom of the Pacific.

Year one of the new plan starts with the smallest and oldest aircraft inventory we have had since the end of World War II. The cause is certainly not that our air arms are being starved of money. Even after adjusting for inflation, current spending is significantly higher than Cold War outlays were for far larger aircraft inventories. The planes our services are now buying are inexcusably more expensive than the ones they're replacing—deliberately so. Moreover, they come with no commensurate increase in effectiveness. Just the opposite.

In 1970, our fighter and attack aircraft supply stood at roughly 8,000 aircraft. Today, we have just 3,300. The new plan continues that trend, down to 2,900 by 2020, a 10 percent reduction. To get there, the fighter/attack budget will swell by 40 percent, from about \$12 billion to roughly \$17 billion.

Gazing into their crystal ball, the planners also recommend shrinking the forces for other missions, again while sharply increasing costs. The command, control, and intelligence aircraft fleet will drop 10 percent in only five years—from 580 down to 527—but the bill will soar from \$5 billion up to almost \$8 billion. Cargo, tanker, and bomber inventories stay roughly level, though their spending increases, dramatically in the case of tankers and bombers. No doubt fearing further embarrassment, the 30-year plan offers no force shrinkage or budget bloat details beyond the year 2020.

The plan's other unmentioned problem is the aging of our already geriatric aircraft inventory, which the Pentagon propels apace. Quite remarkable are the numbers of F-15s, F-16s, F-18s, and A-10s, all originally designed in the late 1960s, that will be hanging around until

2040 because their replacement, the vulnerable and sluggish F-35, costs an outrageous three to ten times more. Ditto for the bomber, cargo, and tanker fleets, many of which are due to grow even longer in the tooth than the fighters. This shriveling force will cost an extra \$9 billion at the end of the decade—on top of the \$22 billion we're spending now.

JUST TWO PRE-PROTOTYPES OF THE SO-CALLED "STEALTHY" (THEY NEVER ARE) DRONES ARE COSTING AT LEAST \$635 MILLION. THE FLIGHT PLAN IS ALREADY MONTHS BEHIND SCHEDULE.

To make it all worse, this scheme assumes flawless implementation; not a penny of new cost overrun is anticipated—an appalling irresponsibility in the face of Government Accountability Office reports of major weapons overruns of \$295 billion since 2001.

Not everyone, however, is swooning. Quite notable is a chart in the plan that reveals a Navy gambit to reach deep into the Air Force's wallet. With only about 30 percent of the aircraft, the Navy ends up with at least 50 percent of the funding. We have not heard the last of this. Budget share is the most prized jewel in the Pentagon's cut-throat bureaucratic wars. The Navy's bullion raid is sure to be met with drawn Air Force knives. The jostling between pro-Navy and pro-Air Force factions in Congress, defined by the location of contractor plants, will be fodder for the Washington press for months to come.

But the real fight to watch will be the brawl over funding for drones—or, as the authors like to spin them, "Unmanned Multirole Surveillance and Strike Aircraft." In just ten years, this court favorite is slated to grow from 72 units today to 476, a more than 600 percent increase. The money will increase—only proportionally, the plan-

ners blithely predict—from about \$1 billion today to almost \$7 billion in 2020, a 700 percent increase. A virtual declaration of budget war, the plan assigns all that drone spending increase to the Navy. Air Force drone spending will actually decline.

Two assumptions in the drone plan stretch credulity to the breaking point:

first, future drones will not experience the ongoing geometric increase in cost of manned aircraft; second, Air Force generals will stand by idly with nothing for themselves while the admirals walk off with an extra \$6 billion per year. In reality, total drone spending will be far higher, and the Air Force will never permit itself to fall so shamefully behind.

Also beyond belief is the schedule and performance that technology-fantacists on Gates's staff and in the Navy think they will acquire. Unlike today's relatively simple, slow, and light Predator drone, the X-47B drone the Navy wants is 20 times larger, weighs 22 tons, and flies at Mach .7. Just two pre-prototypes of the so-called "stealthy" (they never are) drones are costing at least \$635 million. The flight plan is already months behind schedule.

No mere vehicle for video cameras, radars, and infrared gizmos to peep on the enemy, the X-47B will not only pretend to find all targets on a hypothetically fogless battlefield, but, replacing manned strike aircraft, will then attack those targets with two tons of guided bombs. Our clumsy attacks in Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Yemen, using drones carrying much the same sensors

as the X-47B, make news with embarrassing regularity. Our Predators and Reapers are tasked with decapitating the al-Qaeda and Taliban leadership, but they prove much more successful at killing civilians, infuriating the previously uncommitted local population into supporting the enemy, and deluding Americans into thinking remote-control bombing of other peoples' homelands is a freebie spectator sport with no U.S.

OUR PREDATORS AND REAPERS ARE TASKED WITH DECAPITATING THE AL-QAEDA AND TALIBAN LEADERSHIP, BUT THEY PROVE MUCH MORE SUCCESSFUL AT KILLING CIVILIANS.

casualties and no consequences—a truly dangerous fallacy, as the renewed attacks from al-Qaeda's growing confederacy so vividly demonstrate.

The Navy, however, tops the Air Force's drone delusions with a vision that it will land its tailless 22-ton beast by remote control on rolling, pitching carrier decks at sea. That will be difficult, perhaps impossible, given the nearly crippling rate of drone crashes we continue to experience while landing on *terra firma*. Grappling with that task will certainly create the occasion for lots of overruns and schedule slippages. Even without those overruns, the Navy approach appears to offer nothing that can't be achieved from land with current Predators at about one twenty-fifth the cost.

In any case, capitalizing on Gates's blessing for these drone projects, the USAF is already forging ahead with secret work on an intercontinental nuclear/conventional bomber drone, a breathtakingly useless concept. Their newly revised Long Range Strike Platform project costs \$1.9 billion just for the start-up demonstrator phase. One candidate, the innocently dubbed X-47C,

apparently already under a "black" contract at Northrop Grumman, would carry a modest five-ton payload despite a projected total heft upward of 110 tons.

On the face of it, this latest 30-year plan just rubberstamps what the Air Force and Navy have been doing ever since the Cold War started: shrinking our air forces and increasing their age while steadily increasing costs and inef-

fectiveness. That's bad enough for American taxpayers, but this new budget has new wrinkles.

Gates has unchained a new aerospace spending monster. It hatched unobtrusively in 2001 with the \$4 million Predator to become a \$100 million Navy carrier drone that will, in a decade, lead to a literally mindless Air Force intercontinental bomber drone, assuredly nuclear capable, with an unknown sticker price in the billions.

This cost explosion in the drone budget will devour money required for the two necessary and effective forms of air support we owe our troops, capabilities that the aviation bureaucracies in the Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps have systematically deprived them of: round-the-clock, immediately available, single-purpose close-air support and on-call emergency aerial resupply straight to the battlefield.

Worse, the huge expansion of the drone fleet deepens the U.S. commitment to a future of worldwide aerial assassinations and bombing foreign lands—and will increase the propensity of our politicians to open these fronts because of the illusion that such aggres-

sion will be cost- and casualty-free. The resulting damage to real American security will be incalculable.

But worst of all, the Gates-approved plan for shrinking buys of unconscionably expensive and ineffective weapons is hardly limited to airplanes. The same disease infuses a new naval shipbuilding plan and the Army's future combat vehicles. These forces, contracting and aging at inflating cost, cry out for meaningful reform. Instead, the decay is being used as the pretext to funnel more and more taxpayer dollars to fewer and fewer defense mega-corporations. They, in turn, recycle increasing amounts of that money into our politics, where it is eating away at our governance, our democracy, and our security. ■

Winslow T. Wheeler is the Director of the Straus Military Reform Project at the Center for Defense Information. He worked on national security issues for 31 years for senators from both political parties and for the Government Accountability Office. Pierre M. Sprey, together with USAF fighter pilots John Boyd and Everest Riccioni, brought to fruition the F-16 and led the design team for the A-10 and helped implement the program. Both are contributors to the new anthology America's Defense Meltdown: Pentagon Reform for President Obama and the New Congress.

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BARACK'S BROKEN PROMISES

WINDING DOWN THE WAR ON TERROR

"It is time to bring our troops home because it has made us less safe."
—Barack Obama, *New York Times*, Aug. 12, 2007

"President Barack Obama has approved a significant troop increase for Afghanistan. ... The increased troop levels are expected to last three to four years, the military official said. However, the administration official said there was no clear timeline."
—CNN, Feb. 18, 2009

CUTTING SPENDING

"There is no doubt that we've been living beyond our means and we're going to have to make some adjustments. Now, what I've done throughout this campaign is to propose a net spending cut."

—Barack Obama, Oct. 15, 2008

"Mr. Obama plans to increase the debt by at least \$9.1 trillion over the next decade. In that period of time, Mr. Obama's programs will increase federal spending by \$400 billion to \$500 billion per year ... the largest peacetime increase ever in government spending."

—*Washington Times*, Jan. 19, 2010

CLOSING GITMO

"I don't want to be ambiguous about this. We are going to close Guantanamoo."

—Barack Obama, "This Week," Jan. 12, 2009

"As one of his very first acts as president, Obama signed an executive order to close the military prison for terror suspects within a year. The one-year mark arrives Friday, and he will miss it by a wide margin, likely a year or more. He has not offered a new deadline."

—*The Canadian Press*, Jan. 21, 2010

LIMITING EXECUTIVE POWER

"I will not use signing statements to nullify or undermine congressional instructions as enacted into law."

—Barack Obama, *Boston Globe*, Dec. 20, 2007

"We were surprised to read your signing statement in which you expressed the view that you are constitutionally free to ignore the conditions duly adopted in the legislative process..."

—Reps. Barney Frank and David Obey, letter to President Obama, July 21, 2009

BROKERING MIDEAST PEACE

"My goal is to make sure that we work, starting from the minute I'm sworn into office, to try to find some breakthroughs."

—Barack Obama, Amman, Jordan, July 22, 2008

"I think it is absolutely true that what we did this year didn't produce the kind of breakthrough that we wanted, and if we had anticipated some of these political problems on both sides earlier, we might not have raised expectations as high."

—Barack Obama, *Time*, Jan. 21, 2010

ELIMINATING EARMARKS

"We are going to ban all earmarks—the process by which individual members insert pet projects without review."

—Barack Obama, Jan. 6, 2008

"President Obama will sign the \$410 billion omnibus spending bill recently passed by the Democratic controlled Congress. The bill contains some 9,000 earmarks, spending items inserted by individual Congressmen for pet projects in their districts."

—*Politics Daily*, March 2, 2009

EXCLUDING LOBBYISTS

"I have done more to take on lobbyists than any other candidate in this race—and I've won. I don't take a dime of their money, and when I am president, they won't find a job in my White House."

—Barack Obama, Spartanburg, S.C., Nov. 3, 2007

"A National Journal look at 267 Obama nominees and appointees found that at least 30—or about 11 percent—have been registered lobbyists at some point during the past five years."

—*National Journal*, March 21, 2009

INCREASING TRANSPARENCY

"All agencies should adopt a presumption in favor of disclosure, in order to renew their commitment to the principles embodied in FOIA, and to usher in a new era of open Government."

—Barack Obama, Jan. 21, 2009

"President Obama has embraced Bush administration justifications for denying public access to White House visitor logs ..."

—*Washington Post*, June 17, 2009

Southern Cross

The meaning of the Mel Bradford moment

By David Gordon

“YOU JUST CAN’T attack Lincoln and get away with it—you just can’t.” Hearing these words, spoken in front of a portrait of Lincoln at the Rockford Institute in 1989, is my first memory of Mel Bradford. That remark, delivered in an accent characteristic of the Texas-Oklahoma border that was his home country, reflected the wounds of an incident that brought him to national attention.

In 1981, Ronald Reagan intended to nominate Bradford as chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities. The appointment seemed entirely appropriate: Bradford, a professor of English at the University of Dallas who wrote his doctoral dissertation under the Southern Agrarian and Fugitive Poet Donald Davidson, was a distinguished literary scholar. But Reagan’s wish to elevate him to the prestigious post did not stem solely from Bradford’s academic credentials. The president and he were acquaintances, and he had worked hard in Reagan’s campaign for the Republican presidential nomination. Influential conservatives such as Russell Kirk and Sen. Jesse Helms also knew and admired Bradford.

But a Southerner who stressed localism was not what neoconservatives such as Norman Podhoretz and the Kristols, *père et fils*, had in mind. They preferred William Bennett and, in typical fashion, did not confine themselves to magnifying the paltry virtues of their favorite, but launched smears against the president’s choice, dredging up Bradford’s 1972 support for George Wallace and—the issue that they stressed

interminably—his criticism of Abraham Lincoln. Their efforts to portray Bradford as some latter-day Theodore Bilbo, however unwarranted, proved effective. Bennett received the nod.

The campaign hurt Bradford greatly. But if he knew in advance that attacking Lincoln was so dangerous, why did he do it? Because far from being some crank spoiling the schoolchild consensus, Mel Bradford had principled reasons for his critique—and he deserves to be remembered as far more than a footnote to neocon machinations.

No one who met Bradford could easily forget him. He was strikingly tall and weighed about 350 pounds. He wore a white Stetson and would often look at people sideways, holding his head at an angle. On one occasion, he stopped a punch about an inch from someone’s face without looking at him. (In his youth, he had been an amateur boxer.) “That’s how I keep my graduate students in line!” he laughed.

Bradford began his career as a literary scholar, not a political theorist, and was perhaps best known for his work on William Faulkner. He had no truck with critical efforts to portray Faulkner as alienated from the South. To the contrary, he saw the novelist as thoroughly embedded within his native region. The trouble with other academic interpreters was that they failed to recognize their own prejudices of place: “Most of these mandarins teach in the universities of our Northeastern Megalopolis,” Bradford wrote. “Concerning the rest of the Republic, they have only conven-

tional responses proceeding not from reflection but from fear, ignorance, and animosity. That this other America, in all of its antique multiplicity, should foster or possess serious literature is for them a contradiction in terms.”

The relation of a writer to his local community and culture was a *leitmotif* of Bradford’s literary scholarship. Indeed, his stress on the importance of place in literature informed his political views. For Bradford, true politics grew out of local tradition. As he put it in his presidential address to the John Randolph Club in 1990, “The American regime ... is and forever shall be the result of a practice, a network of common experience and well-established institutions united in a common way.”

Bradford rejected Lincoln because he saw him as a revolutionary, intent on replacing the American Republic established by the Constitution with a centralized and leveling despotism. He thought that James McPherson, perhaps the most eminent pro-Union authority on the Civil War, was perfectly right to say in *Drawn With the Sword*,

Negative liberty was the dominant theme in early American history—freedom *from* constraints on individual rights imposed by a powerful state. The Bill of Rights is the classic expression of negative liberty, or Jeffersonian humanistic liberalism. The first ten amendments to the Constitution protect individual liberties by placing a strait-jacket of ‘shall nots’ on the federal

government. ... Whereas eleven of the first twelve constitutional amendments severely limited the power of the national government, six of the next seven vastly expanded those powers.

McPherson welcomed those later amendments and Lincoln's drive toward centralization that had paved the way. Bradford rejected them.

The original understanding of the Constitution, Bradford maintained, conformed much more closely to the Southern position than to Lincoln's acts of usurpation. In *Original Intentions*, Bradford highlighted the fact that the Framers did not even approve of James Madison's plans for a strong central government, let alone the monarchical aspirations of Alexander Hamilton. Madison wanted the central government to have the right to veto acts of state legislatures, but this found little favor with most of the delegates to the Philadelphia Convention.

As even the chastened Madison admitted, the ultimate authority for interpreting the Constitution was the understanding of its provisions held by the delegates to the state ratifying conventions, since the votes of these delegates actually established the new government. These conventions were alert to the danger that a central government might try to take away the sovereignty that properly belonged to the peoples of the states, and they consented to the new arrangements only on condition that their rights were upheld. Later work by Kevin Gutzman has fully confirmed Bradford's analysis: the Virginia Convention, for example, explicitly reserved the right to leave the Union if the new government exceeded the powers granted to it.

But why does this matter? Suppose Bradford was correct that the South had the better Constitutional argument against Lincoln over secession. The

issue is even more pressing because Bradford himself did not think that secession had been the best course of action. He was in sympathy with Alexander H. Stephens, an Old Whig who wanted to preserve the Union while resisting Lincoln's policies.

To draw out the wider ramifications, we must introduce Bradford's principal intellectual antagonist: Harry Jaffa, a disciple of Leo Strauss and longtime professor of political science at Claremont College. In *Crisis of the House Divided*, Jaffa argued that America had been founded on the clause in the Declaration of Independence that held it to be self-evident that "all men are created equal." Lincoln, more consistently than the Founding Fathers, saw the implications of the equality clause. Slavery, the "peculiar institution" of the South, must be set on course toward "ultimate extinction." Though Lincoln professed willingness to accept the Constitution's guarantees of states' rights, the seceding Southern states had little doubt that he intended to proceed radically against them.

IN JAFFA'S INTERPRETATION, **CALHOUN WAS A PROTO-FASCIST, WHO UTTERLY DENIED THE NOTION THAT INHERENT RIGHTS RESTRICT GOVERNMENT.** JAFFA MIGHT HAVE SUBTITLED HIS BOOK *FROM CALHOUN TO HITLER*.

In Jaffa's rendition, Lincoln was guided by "the laws of nature and nature's God" to which the Declaration professed adherence. Jaffa contrasted this principled observance of natural law with the Southern position, best exemplified by John C. Calhoun. In Jaffa's interpretation, Calhoun was a proto-fascist, who utterly denied the notion that inherent rights restrict government. Jaffa might have subtitled his book *From Calhoun to Hitler*. Indeed, he extended his *argumentum ad Hitlerum* to contemporary conservatives who rejected his ver-

sion of egalitarianism. He said that the "distinctive American conservatism" political theorist Willmoore Kendall sought to discover in the historical habits of the American people "would be a distinctive American fascism, or national socialism" because "the consensus that [Kendall] revered was one that embodied within itself the legal sanctions given to the institution of slavery."

Bradford rejected all of this. What Jaffa saw as the policy of liberty and free government Bradford viewed as the path to tyranny, and the two scholars battled it out in numerous exchanges in *National Review* and *Modern Age*. (They remained on good terms personally, however, and Jaffa supported Bradford for NEH chairman.) Bradford struck at Jaffa's central contention about Lincoln and modern political philosophy. Lincoln favored equality; but how, Bradford asked, can equality be brought about? Only by the government's pursuit of a policy of constant leveling, in which those who excel are held back for the alleged advantage of

less well-off competitors. Such a Procrustean course of action is the antithesis of liberty, not its guarantee, as Jaffa wrongly thought.

In "The Heresy of Equality," included in his anthology *A Better Guide Than Reason*, Bradford considered an objection to his thesis about equality. His strictures applied only to equality of result; but is not equality of opportunity an entirely different matter?

Bradford did not think so. Efforts to secure equality of opportunity will inevitably lead to the leveling policies of

more radical egalitarians. If, for example, someone from a poor family cannot avail himself of the educational advantages that are open to the wealthy, does he really have the same opportunity for advancement? To secure genuine equality of opportunity, the state will have to compensate the less affluent. Equality of opportunity leads to equality of result. As Bradford put it, “equality achieved is the mainspring, the central teaching of the Left’s secular theology ... the kind of equality of opportunity that insists on the right results in every contest.”

This argument, probably Bradford’s most important contribution to political philosophy, gains support from an unexpected quarter. Independently of Bradford, John Rawls advances the same argument in *A Theory of Justice*. Like Bradford, Rawls thinks that genuine equality of opportunity requires the pursuit of substantive equality; but, in contrast to Bradford, he favors this pursuit. Bradford did not think the price worth paying.

There were further grounds on which to criticize the 16th president. For Bradford, Lincoln’s magniloquent declarations of support for natural law could not be accepted as they stood, but must be analyzed for their rhetorical effect. His attempt to do so, in “Lincoln, the Declaration, and Secular Puritanism: A Rhetoric for Continuing Revolution,” got him into serious trouble with Bennett’s supporters. In a footnote, Bradford pointed out that Hitler had referred to natural law in *Mein Kampf*; is that not a striking illustration of the fact that such language is empty of meaning until its realization in practice is spelled out? His antagonists pounced. Bradford was equating Lincoln with Hitler! Of course, he did no such thing. But as we saw to our cost in the propaganda barrage that led to the Iraq War, truth has little significance when it stands in the way of a neocon endeavor.

Bradford wanted to return to the original understanding on which our Republic had been founded, but one might ask whether he correctly understood the Founding. What about the self-evident truths of the Declaration of Independence? Do these not advance just the sort of universal commitment to rights that Bradford rejected?

He was ready with a response. In his view, the heart of the Declaration was an assertion of the people of the American colonies that they were no longer bound to Great Britain. He took the equality clause that so excited Jaffa as little more than persiflage. He noted that among the grievances of the Declaration against George III were complaints that the king had set against the colonists “merciless Indian savages” and that he had “excited domestic insurrections [i.e., slave insurrections] amongst us.” Evidently slaves and Indians were less equal than others.

Regardless of the historical circumstances of the Declaration, however, must one agree with Bradford in rejecting appeals to natural rights altogether? If Lincoln and Rawls must go, do they have to take John Locke with them? As a libertarian, I would say no, but Bradford disagreed. Everyone acquainted with the history of political thought knows Locke’s *Second Treatise of Government*, but his *First Treatise* is little read. This was a reply to a defense of patriarchal monarchy by Sir Robert Filmer. Bradford was one of the few modern writers who thought that Filmer had the better of the argument, as he makes clear in his contribution to *Saints, Sovereigns, and Scholars: Essays in Honor of Frederick Wilhelmsen*. (Wilhelmsen, a distinguished Thomist philosopher, was Bradford’s friend and colleague at the University of Dallas.)

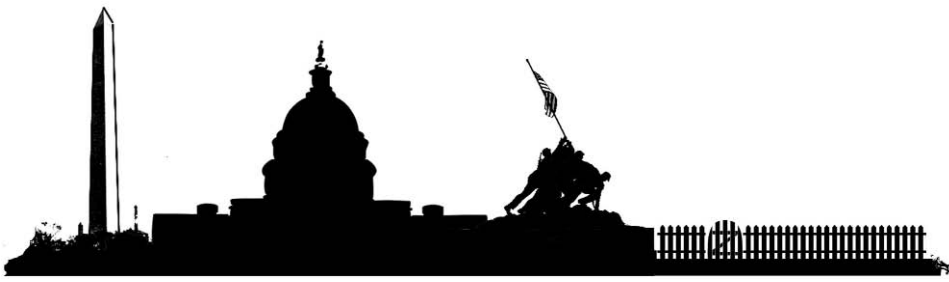
Bradford utterly rejected Locke and natural rights for the same reasons he criticized Lincoln’s rhetorical effusions. Rights lacked meaning in the absence of

concrete applications. But cannot a supporter of natural rights meet this challenge by saying in detail what he takes to be the universally valid rights? Bradford, as always, had an answer at hand—in this case, one greatly influenced by the philosopher Alasdair MacIntyre and his key work, *After Virtue*. MacIntyre contended that the terms of an ethical theory make sense only within a particular historical tradition. Universal rights were the product of what he called “the Enlightenment Project,” which had now collapsed. Bradford concurred and favored a return to local tradition, particularly that of the South, in place of the universalizing tendencies of the Enlightenment.

Bradford’s rejection of natural rights by no means put him in opposition to most of the policies advocated by contemporary libertarians, however, and the foremost 20th-century defender of Lockean liberties, Murray Rothbard, was a friend of his. They stood together during the first Bush administration in battling “the monstrosity of big-government conservatism.” In denouncing the growth of an increasingly demanding central government, he was at one with the libertarians, though they defended their opposition with different arguments. Even persons inclined to see more in Lockean rights than Bradford did will gain much from studying his work.

He died in 1993, well before conservatism had plumbed its current depths, but Mel Bradford’s stirring words still call us to action: “We must thunder against equality produced and required by the power of the state and live to confront big-government conservatives at the point of their most serious compromise with ordered liberty.” ■

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Heartbreak Hill

For the past nine years, I've spent two hours a week at a volunteer job on Capitol Hill. When I tell the newer counselors when I started they exclaim, "Nine years?"

You must've seen everything!" I wonder how Parisians—or Athenians—must feel when they visit America and see our shop signs: MURRAY AND SONS, EST. 1957.

Nine years is nothing, yet in official Washington, outlasting an administration is an accomplishment. Capitol Hill is the place where the cliché that Washington is a transient town becomes most vivid. The groups colonizing familiar corners of the Hawk and Dove bar shift and change, faces vanishing and getting replaced like the parts of the philosopher's axe. Then summertime comes—intern season! Unleashed by the colleges on an unsuspecting nation, they move in cheery, callow packs through the think tanks and congressional offices and happy hours. These bright bits of sparkly fluff are the happiest boys and girls in Washington. They've never heard the phrase "West Germany" and think Al Gore was the candidate of a "humble foreign policy." I'll never understand the sexual appeal of interns. Although they clearly have something—in college we'd joke about the incoming class of "refreshments"—they're about as sexy and as knowing as a lollipop.

In election season, you work around the clock, downing beers in the office as you watch the results come in. In the off-season, well, there's a reason they call it "recess."

This is the place with "Southern efficiency and Northern charm," the place nobody should live too long—"inside

the Beltway." When people move here, burn out, and write whining columns for the *New York Times* about "life in Washington," this is where they lived. (So it's their own fault.)

But even in Washington-the-dateline, you can catch glimpses of D.C. the hometown. Even in the neighborhood of white domes and guided tours, eternally misguided D.C. wanders in: a deer broke through a plate-glass window once and staggered through the Capitol like a Saturday night in Adams Morgan. In 2002, a fox sneaked into the Supreme Court building. Security cameras caught the fox entering, but no fox ever left. Local legend suggests that it evaded capture by turning into Justice Scalia.

In Union Station, the interns stand left and walk right in defiance of local escalator culture. Deaf students from Gallaudet University mall-rat in sign language. Walking east, you slip into a neighborhood of young families and group housing—two kinds of each. One kind of young family wields giant canvas-hooded strollers of German construction, Baby's First SUV. The other young families, with their stronghold farther east, push castoff strollers from cousins. In one kind of group home, friends band together to share expenses, host art shows in the living room, park a tiny backyard grill at the top of the fire escape, and fight about the refrigerator. In the other kind, a group home is the place where your case-worker will discuss whether or not they have to let you in.

D.C. is mostly a springtime town, but I've found that Capitol Hill is most beautiful in the early summer twilight. Northeast of the train station is the neighborhood where I usually see the first mulberries of the season, and then the first fireflies, and then the first bees. As the sun sinks below the skyline of official Washington, the night-blooming flowers lift and unfurl their graceful white trumpets. The neighborhood smells like honeysuckle and cheap barbecue, overblown roses and thin cigars.

This place feels safe to me, even though the volunteers from Maryland or Virginia insist on driving me to the subway after dark. In D.C. safety is a sliding scale. There are two women who sit on their stoop here, smoking and muttering dark imprecations like the Graeae missing a sister. Sometimes, when they're especially outgoing, they vulture for spare change from passersby. On bad days, they scream at their neighbors and make physical threats. When Jane Jacobs praised urban neighborhoods with "eyes on the street," I don't think the Weird Sisters were what she had in mind.

Is Capitol Hill safe? Is anywhere? It was in this neighborhood that a young receptionist took me aside and lifted up the back of her blouse so I could see the bruises she'd taken from her boyfriend. "Do you think it's a problem? I mean, I know I should leave him, but ... do you think it's really a problem?" Dateline Washington has its young people—so, for our sins, does hometown D.C.

Official Washington can disappoint you, but only home can break your heart. ■

Sour Vintage

Raising a glass to Kingsley Amis

By Geoffrey Wheatcroft

IN THE LAST CENTURY, English writers came in crops or vintages. Maybe the greatest was the first, born in the reign of Edward VII during the first decade of the century: Graham Greene, Evelyn Waugh, George Orwell, and Anthony Powell all began life within 30 months of one another. Then there was the crop born in the years after World War II: Martin Amis, Julian Barnes, and Ian McEwan.

In between had been another generation, flanked by the wars. Two names in particular stand out: Kingsley Amis and Philip Larkin, both born in 1922. Unlike the vintage of 20 years earlier, they came from modest lower-middle-class homes and didn't attend public schools (as the English call elite private boarding schools), but they went to Oxford, where they met at St John's College in 1941.

They remained close friends for more than 40 years, not meeting often—Larkin always lived a long way from London and Swansea, when Amis was there in the 1950s—but corresponding in letters that were scabrous and indecent, childish but funny. Both men were insular to the point of xenophobia: Amis had a couple of spells at American colleges, Princeton in the late 1950s, Vanderbilt ten years later, but didn't return, not least because an acute fear of flying meant he could only travel by sea. Larkin never visited the United States.

Their friendship ended only when Amis stood in the pulpit of St. Mary the Virgin in Cottingham, a Yorkshire village church, one chilly December day in 1985 and gave a touching and percep-

tive funeral address for his oldest friend. Larkin had died of cancer. Ten years on, Amis died at 73. He had no specific illness but, weakened by many years of intimate acquaintance with the bottle, was carried away by a bout of pneumonia.

By the time both died, they were famous, though not quite as they had once hoped. Amis originally wanted to be a poet and published a few volumes of poetry, but became a novelist. Larkin wanted to be a novelist and published two early novels, but became a poet. It was Amis who was first established as a "celebrity writer," his opinions eagerly sought by newspapers. A collection of interviews has just been published as *Conversations with Kingsley Amis* (edited by Thomas DePietro, University Press of Mississippi), and they bring out much of what was most memorable about him, though that means the bad as well as the good.

Myself a generation younger, I got to know them both when they were middle-aged. I knew Amis quite well from the 1970s, Larkin only slightly and later on, thanks to Amis. By then they were both in the process of turning into caricatures, as writers sometimes do—Larkin the miserly misanthrope, Amis the cantankerous curmudgeon. All the same, each left behind a real body of work.

How had they got there? Unfit for military service, Larkin graduated from Oxford and became a librarian, his day job for the rest of his life. Amis joined the army in 1942, served in Normandy as

a signals officer, returned to Oxford after the war, and became an academic, appointed lecturer in English in 1949 at what was then University College of Swansea. That was also the year his second son, Martin, was born. Amis and Hilary Bardwell, his first wife, had two sons, and then a daughter. Her birth in 1954 inspired Larkin's beautiful little poem "Born Yesterday":

May you be ordinary;
Have, like other women,
An average of talents:
Not ugly, not good-looking,
Nothing uncustomary
To pull you off your balance.

That hope was belied by Sally's very sad short life, but that's a story for her brother Martin to tell, as he has.

Although Swansea had its share of insufferably pompous persons of the type Amis lethally pinned down as Professor Welch in *Lucky Jim*, his first novel, the germ of that book was actually a visit to Larkin at University College, Leicester, where he then worked: "The young man surrounded by bores who for various reasons he doesn't dare to offend."

What might be called the varsity novel was well established in England, often marked by lushly sentimental reminiscence of gilded undergraduate life, as in *Sinister Street* by Compton Mackenzie or Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited*. But Amis's *Lucky Jim* was something quite new, the English campus novel. That novelty was one reason the book was a

instant success, in England, then in America, and in many European countries (as *Jim il Fortunato*, *Glück für Jim*, and *Jim-la-Chance*, I was delighted to learn, not to mention *Jim Szazea-ciarz* in Polish). It was new also in its hero or anti-hero. Jim Dixon is a dissipated young man trying to make a start in academic life for want of anything better, although he's more interested in beer and girls than the medieval ship-building that is meant to be his subject, and his not-very-promising career comes to a disastrous end when he calms his nerves with too much drink before a lecture.

This scene has clear echoes of "prize-giving at Market Snodsbury Grammar School" and Gussie Fink-Nottle's immortal intoxicated speech in P.G. Wodehouse's *Right Ho, Jeeves*. Amis at his best was in the great English tradition of the comic novel that runs from Thackeray and Dickens through Waugh along the line to, well, Martin Amis in an earlier phase of his career. Kingsley continued

opinionated, thirsty, and lecherous, just like Jim.

He combined teaching with novel-writing and journalism, a vigorous social life and an even more vigorous love life, although that expression is far too genteel. No one now need be told that when Larkin wrote, in one of his more famous opening lines, that "Sexual intercourse began / In nineteen sixty-three," he was employing the literary device known as irony. Long before that date Amis was a remarkably enthusiastic adulterer, not least with the female students whom, in those bad old days, he was able to treat as a personal harem. It's surprising that his first marriage lasted as long as it did.

In 1962, he met Elizabeth Jane Howard, a gifted writer herself, and left his family. His *coup de foudre* was followed by years of apparent bliss, and this decade, his forties, was the time of his best work, with a series of terrific books: *One Fat Englishman*; *I Want It Now*; *Girl*, 20; and *The Green Man*. He was brasher than ever in public, and

mandarin or coated with style or anything like that, but they'll be interesting material for university discussion." Being Kingsley, he had to add that he preferred Harold Robbins or Grace Metalious: "what you can't say against them is that they are writing to appeal to campus classes," as though that were the only recommendation any novelist needed.

Then something went wrong. This was in the 1970s, when I first knew him and when he was still boisterous but just beginning to deteriorate. His 1978 novel *Jake's Thing* is both embarrassing and unsuccessful: the veteran novelist and critic Francis King wrote a review of feline skill in *The Spectator*, ending with the words, "Not many novelists in England today could have written a better comic novel than *Jake's Thing*; but Mr. Amis is one of them." The least priggish or squeamish readers were startled by the misogyny (although the final tirade against the female sex has amused even some women), and the theme of a man struggling with impotence is not in truth a fruitful one for the comic writer.

When Amis's letters were published after his death, it became painfully clear that his second marriage was already falling apart at the time, and that Jake's problem was also his creator's. This is a decorous literary essay and not a personal advice column, but two practical thoughts occur. One is that when a liaison begins, as was true of Kingsley's with Jane, on a basis of intense passion, it may not survive the inevitable cooling of that ardor. The other is that if a chap wants to retain his amorous vigor until later middle age, he would be well advised not to drink quite as much as Kingsley did, a daily bottle or more of scotch for years. Then again, Kingsley almost echoed W.C. Fields: "My wife drove me to drink. It's the only thing I'm grateful to her for." When Jane finally said it was either her or the booze, he had no difficulty in making his choice, and it wasn't for her.

HE SUPPORTED THE WAR IN VIETNAM, THOUGH HE COMBINED THAT ACTIVISM WITH AN OBSTINATE VEIN OF CULTURAL ANTI-AMERICANISM.

to teach at Swansea until 1961, when he moved to Cambridge, but he quit after less than two years and thereafter lived by his pen and his considerable wits.

As with any writer worth taking seriously, some of Amis's books are better than others. After *Lucky Jim* came *That Uncertain Feeling* and then *I Like It Here*, generally and rightly dismissed as a failure. In these first years, he was labeled an "Angry Young Man," the title of a now forgotten autobiographical book published in 1951 by the now forgotten Leslie Paul. But Amis, who would one day become the definitive grumpy old man, wasn't particularly angry at that time. He was lively, bumptious,

while he was swerving violently away from youthful leftism, he supported the war in Vietnam, though he combined that with an obstinate vein of cultural anti-Americanism.

To be sure, he was as funny as ever. "So if," an interviewer asks, "I said words like Norman Mailer or Saul Bellow or John Updike or Philip Roth ..." "Please don't," he responds. And "I don't think any Englishman, again thank God, could have written *Portnoy's Complaint*." Still, he was quite right more than 40 years ago in complaining about "novels that seem to get written for an audience of academics. I don't mean they're academic novels in the sense that they're

As he drank harder and became more surly, his earlier characteristics became ever more pronounced. One of the most astute American critics 50 years ago, Dwight Macdonald, rightly said that although *Lucky Jim* was a very funny book, it had enjoyed an extraneous success more to do with generation than genius. He saw through the “facile bravura” of Amis’s critical writings, and he also recognized that Kingsley and his chums were in revolt not just against “bourgeois culture,” which had after all been standard form for the literary intelligentsia since the late 19th century, but all culture.

One phrase in Amis’s first book became notorious: Jim hears the strains of “filthy Mozart.” Many years later, Amis irritably mentioned the way “Jim and I have taken a lot of stick and a lot of bad mouthing for being Philistine, aggressively Philistine,” and he tried to refute the charge: “It’s nice to have a pretty girl with large breasts rather than some fearful woman who’s going to talk to you about Ezra Pound and hasn’t got large breasts and probably doesn’t wash much.” This is not, I think, the most con-

vincing refutation imaginable.

In his late 30s, Amis said that the targets of his satire were “bores, of course. And anything that might vaguely be described as Right wing.” Amis joined the Communist Party at Oxford and remained a member, albeit inactive, until 1956, though he was later evasive about that “brief flirtation,” telling Clive James in 1974 that in the nature of things it “couldn’t have lasted very long.” By the time he became famous, he was writing, not very well, about “Socialism and the Intellectuals.”

Then he moved away, far away, from the Left. One reason for his shift was education, or more exactly the decay of the English educational system that has been one of the scandals of my lifetime. And yet, one shrewd interviewer wrote in 1962, “It is not quite clear just how serious he takes his politics.” Not very seriously, in my view, and it was as bad an idea for conservatives to treat Amis as an important political voice in his later years as it was for leftists to do so earlier. He was yet another illustration of Cardinal Newman’s profound observation that convictions change but

habits of mind endure. In whichever political guise, Kingsley was clever without being deeply intelligent, and he had prejudices rather than beliefs.

This is a little ungrateful. In 1981, I wanted to interview Larkin, whom I didn’t then know, and mentioned this to Amis. Years later, when Amis’s letters appeared, I found that he had written to Larkin commending me, adding that I was “quite good fun, too.” So was Kingsley much of the time—and so, more surprisingly, was Philip in his way. As I discovered, he was courteous, companionable, and amusing, quite unlike the misanthropic recluse he was taken for, not without some encouragement from himself.

All the same, Amis turned not merely into a caricature but a gross parody. One of his most vivid characters is Roger Micheldene, the appalling (but thoroughly entertaining) hero of *One Fat Englishman*. “Of the seven deadly sins,” Amis wrote, “Roger considered himself qualified in gluttony, sloth and lust but distinguished in anger.” The author was presciently describing himself as time went by, less concupiscent but continually angrier.

In the 1950s, photographs show him as a very good-looking young man. But by the last ten years of his life, he was physically repulsive, obese, bloated, and red-faced, as though on the very point of exploding with rage. Until age 50, however annoying he sometimes was, he was good company, but in those last years people at the club he and I went to would shy away as he sat skulking and scowling with a large tumbler of malt whisky. Along with such not altogether happy memories, how fortunate we are that he also left us his books. ■

Geoffrey Wheatcroft’s books include The Controversy of Zion and Yo, Blair! He is writing a study of Winston Churchill’s reputation and influence.

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Arts & Letters

BOOKS

[*Bringing America Home: How America Lost Her Way and How We Can Find Our Way Back*, Tom Pauken, Chronicles Press, 204 pages]

Whatever Happened to Conservatism?

By Daniel McCarthy

THE AMERICAN RIGHT, like Marlon Brando in "On the Waterfront," could have been a contender. Bill Clinton's defeat of George H.W. Bush in 1992 cleared the way for a new wave of conservatives to storm Congress, state governments, and the inner sanctums of the Republican Party itself. Although Newt Gingrich became the symbol of this revolution, a truer representative was Thomas Pauken, elected chairman of the Texas GOP in 1994. Where Gingrich was an apostle of futurist Alvin Toffler, with but a passing interest in conservative thought, Pauken had drunk deeply of the ideas of James Burnham, Willmoore Kendall, and George Carey—whose student he had been at Georgetown University.

The Texas press and political establishment reacted in horror to Pauken's "takeover" of the Republican Party. It was as if Pat Buchanan had become chairman of the RNC. Christian conservatives had been indispensable to his victory, as they were to the nomination of right-leaning Republican candidates across the country. (The media referred to many of these as "stealth candidates,"

though most were outspoken about their antiabortion, anti-tax, and pro-Second Amendment views.) The party's old guard resented the intrusion of these uncouth newcomers, but the '94 elections vindicated the Right. The public demanded an alternative to Clinton-style liberalism that GOP moderates could not supply.

"We had a bumper sticker which read 'Stop Clinton, vote Republican'; and we could not print them fast enough to satisfy the demand," Pauken recalls in *Bringing America Home*. "By their rhetoric and their actions, liberal Democrats like Bill Clinton and Ann Richards put the Reagan coalition of economic and social conservatives back together again—against them." Yet that November also brought to power a team that would soon do to the Right what the Right had done to moderates of George H.W. Bush's ilk. Bush's son George W. defeated "Ma" Richards to become governor of Texas, a victory engineered by the Machiavellian mind of Karl Rove. Both already recognized Pauken as an enemy.

"Fred Barnes, the editor of *The Weekly Standard*, did not have to remind me of the difficult situation I was in," Pauken writes, "when he called to tell me that Bush and Rove had described me as 'their least favorite Republican in Texas'." The state chairman was committed to a philosophical ideal; Bush, like his father, demanded personal loyalty. And Rove, like Gingrich, saw the Right as nothing more than a path to power. "A religious agnostic, Rove was surprisingly adept at mobilizing evangelical conservatives behind the Bush campaign for president," Pauken observes. "Karl got Ralph Reed, the former leader of the Christian Coalition, put on Enron's corporate payroll as a 'consultant,' which freed Reed to work

for Bush's nomination in 2000. Reed helped deliver social conservatives," as did Pat Robertson and Jerry Falwell, whom Rove also courted.

The Right hit its high-water mark between 1994 and 1997, a period roughly coinciding with Pauken's time as Texas GOP chairman. Those were years in which the Republican majority in Congress had yet to be completely tamed by Washington and actually rolled back part of the welfare state; Buchanan's second run for the White House almost derailed Bob Dole's nomination; and Ron Paul returned to Congress. Jesse Helms and Bob Smith sat in the Senate, while colorful right-wingers like Steve Stockman and Helen Chenoweth could be found in the House. Even California had, by its own lights, a conservative governor in the fiscally disciplined, anti-immigration Pete Wilson. If there was not another Goldwater or Reagan on the horizon, at least it seemed clear where the activist and emotional energy of the GOP lay—with outlawing abortion, slashing taxes, repealing gun-control laws, and perhaps even rethinking foreign policy. For the first time in decades, Republicans started to sound like the peace party as they denounced "nation-building" and resisted Clinton's interventions in the Balkans.

Three emerging types of conservatives laid the bedrock of this right-wing renaissance. Groups like the Christian Coalition supplied the electoral muscle—millions of voters and, perhaps more importantly, cadres of committed activists in the tens of thousands who seized the machinery of Republican organizations in states across the Midwest and South. Veterans of the "New Right" that had arisen in the 1970s, such as Paul Weyrich, lent expertise in crafting populist policies and electoral strategies; they emphasized morals and

culture over economics and dreamed of restoring blue-collar Reagan Democrats to the GOP by appealing to their values and class interests. And paleoconservative intellectuals uncovered a “usable past” and sketched a vision of what America should be.

These tendencies had their differences with one another, but they added up to a syndrome quite distinct from the ideology of the *Wall Street Journal* or the old conservatism of the Cold War era. The new varieties of the Right coincided in the person of Pat Buchanan, who drew throngs of religious conservatives to his banner—including a young city councilor from Wasilla, Alaska named Sarah Palin—and laid out a working-class populist “conservatism of the heart.” His brain trust was paleoconservative, and if he had won the Republican nomination in 1992 or 1996, the GOP might have a very different philosophy today.

Pauken also brought these threads together, as his new book reminds us. *Bringing America Home* is part-memoir, part-manifesto of the conservative coalition that would have been—if

prices of everyday goods through the ionosphere and could not help but be regressive. (Imagine a 17 percent federal VAT added to the state and local sales taxes you already pay.) Would the harm to consumers be offset by benefits to producers? Even if so, it’s hard to imagine the consuming many making that sacrifice on behalf of the producing few. Conducting the War on Terror by proxy, meanwhile, may lead to outcomes little better than those so far achieved by direct intervention. Such a strategy would be just as certain to generate blowback and risks undercutting Pauken’s wise advice that the U.S. adopt a more even-handed approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. What’s more, 20 years after the fact, who can now argue that the superpowers’ vicarious struggles in Angola or El Salvador were pivotal to the Cold War’s outcome?

On the other hand, Pauken is indubitably correct about the perverse incentives our tax code creates for corporations to ship jobs overseas and accrue massive debts—which are write-offs where savings would be tax

Pauken’s ideas spring from impeccably conservative sources. Yet they are unlikely to get a serious hearing on today’s Right. Grassroots activists are rarely exposed to noninterventionist or economic nationalist alternatives to the orthodoxy that prevails within the conservative movement. Republican leaders, despite the Religious Right “takeovers” of the 1990s, espouse an agenda very much the opposite of Pauken’s: backing Wall Street against Main Street, soft-selling the social issues, and beating the drums for democratization projects around the globe. How did the Right fall so far, so quickly, from Pauken’s victory in 1994 and the Buchanan Brigades of 1996 to the total triumph of Bush and Rove?

“In one sense, success has led to our downfall,” Pauken suggests. “When conservatives made the Republican Party the majority party in America, the opportunists, pragmatists, and phony conservatives moved in and took control of the Republican Party, and of the conservative movement itself—all in the name of ‘conservatism.’” Fewer lampreys attached themselves to the Right in earlier years for the simple reason that conservatism did not look like a winning bet. Pauken, like Whittaker Chambers, thought he had joined the losing side of history: “The attraction of conservatism to so many young people in the early 1960’s lay purely in its principles,” for there was little prospect of advancement.

By the late 1980s, however, the Right clearly had a future, and so “neoconservative leaders took advantage of the post-Reagan period to extend their influence over conservative opinion outlets. They placed their supporters in key positions in academia, the media, and the foundation world, and they increasingly positioned themselves (and those on the right who shared their worldview) to be the ‘voice of conservatism’ to the outside world.”

Even that might not have prevented the rise of a populist, traditionalist Right, had the coalition behind figures like Buchanan and Pauken not frac-

PAUKEN, LIKE WHITTAKER CHAMBERS, THOUGHT HE HAD JOINED THE LOSING SIDE OF HISTORY: “THE ATTRACTION OF CONSERVATISM TO SO MANY YOUNG PEOPLE IN THE EARLY 1960’S LAY PURELY IN ITS PRINCIPLES.”

George W. Bush and the neoconservatives had not remade the Right in their own image over the last decade. Pauken prescribes an unflinchingly pro-life and morally traditional platform, an economic program that seeks to revive American manufacturing and would permit states to ban usury once more, and a foreign policy of proxy warfare—modeled on Reagan’s campaigns against Soviet influence in Latin America and Africa—in place of large-scale military intervention in the Islamic world.

The merits of some of these proposals are debatable. The revenue-neutral, border-adjusted VAT Pauken recommends in place of corporate, estate, and some payroll taxes would send the

liabilities. Likewise, he is right to wonder how liberal and neoconservative presidents can afford to alienate Russia, a land that ought to be “a natural ally in combating the threat of militant Islam.” And the stances he counsels against abortion and homosexual marriage not only reflect what conservatives profess to believe but have proved to be consistent winners at the ballot box. Pauken is far, however, from thinking that politics can redeem culture. Quite the contrary: he cites John Gray and Camille Paglia—not exactly conservatives—on the vitality of religion to moral and aesthetic renewal. Solzhenitsyn looms large in these pages.

tured. Already in the late 1980s, the crackpot theology of Christian Zionism had begun to take root among many evangelicals. For them, devotion to the State of Israel would match or surpass opposition to abortion or gay rights as the paramount political concern. (Pat Robertson's friendliness to Rudy Giuliani during the 2008 campaign attested to this ideological shift.) In the superficially placid foreign-policy environment of the 1990s, this mutation went unnoticed. Once the attacks of 9/11 brought America directly into conflict in the Islamic world, however, its significance became unmistakable.

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But there is more to the story. Neoconservatives have also understood, far better than paleoconservatives, that the religion of America is America. Evangelicals in particular demand affirmation of the shining city on the hill, a redeemer nation clashing with worldly and supernatural forces of darkness. The very Catholic self-doubt and ethical shading of "paleo" morality is a poor fit for voters accustomed to a personal, enthusiastic religion. The paleos are in more ways than one "anti-charismatic."

Neoconservatives may also have understood American patriotism better. For the paleo, patriotism means Burke's little platoons—not of soldiers but of civil society—and the sentiments in Chesterton's *Napoleon of Notting Hill*: "The patriot never, under any circumstances, boasts of the largeness of his country, but always, and of necessity, boasts of its smallness." But Republican voters conceive of patriotism as something else, a vast idea having to do with "amber waves of grain" from "sea to shining sea" and universal values of the sort spelled out by President Lincoln. And of course, all Americans "support the troops." For the paleoconservative,

that means not wishing to see them killed or deployed in unconstitutional wars. Neoconservatives can offer a more visceral kind of support—not only for the lives of the troops but for their mission, which the neocons firmly believe can be won. Again, the nuances to which paleos are susceptible weaken them in the face of Fox News conservatives, who are always prepared to assert monochromatic truths.

These are not qualities thoughtful conservatives can jettison, since they are at the heart of why Tom Pauken's or Pat Buchanan's approach to public policy is superior to Karl Rove's or

William Kristol's. They address reality; they accept human imperfectibility, including American imperfectibility, even the imperfectibility of the U.S. Army. And these are not necessarily losing positions—the American public is closer to the paleo than the neocon view of the Iraq War. While full-blown economic nationalism is probably a non-starter, many paleo economic policies have at least as good a chance of being accepted today as the neocon policies that have proved disastrous over the past decade. Pauken's ideas do have support.

But the very vehicle that once might have brought ideas like his to the American people is now a barricade preventing them from reaching voters. The conservative movement adamantly opposes any kind of industrial policy, a humbler foreign policy, or too much emphasis on social issues. Wall Street, John Hagee's evangelicals, and Rovian opportunists have built an unbreachable wall of ideology. Any candidate who affirmed Pauken's views could not make it through a Republican primary in most states, perhaps including Texas.

American politics has channels, both

formal and informal—the formal ones are elections and parties, the informal ones are opinion-forming institutions such as magazines and think tanks. These mediate what reaches the public. To get ideas before the voters requires using such institutions. Conservatives created some of their own in the years between Goldwater's defeat and George W. Bush's victory. But those channels are now controlled by the alliance of neoconservatives and Republican professionals. Reclaiming them for the Right would require either winning back Christian conservatives or finding another electoral bloc even bigger—this would be the bottom-up approach—or else practicing the arts of infiltration as skillfully as the neoconservatives once did to strip them of their funding and intellectual prestige.

Paleoconservatives are ill-suited to wage this kind of institutional warfare, however. Their heroes are almost without exception the losers of history—Jacobites, Antifederalists, Confederates, the Old Right. Each of these lost causes may have had its merits, and affirming them all has the advantage of providing critical distance from the Whig interpretation of history. Yet the example they set creates a temptation to quietism or romantic gestures. Sam Francis called the old traditionalist conservatives "beautiful losers." Over time, that is what some paleoconservatives have become.

But not Tom Pauken. He remains in the political fray, as head of the Texas Workforce Commission under Rick Perry. He's fought the good fight within the Nixon and Reagan administrations, each of which was divided between moderates and conservatives. He knows how the game is played. *Bringing America Home* and his earlier book, *The Thirty Years War*, contain valuable lessons. The most valuable of all, though, is that politics matters, and defeatism comes at a price the principled Right, and the country, cannot afford to pay. ■

Daniel McCarthy is senior editor of The American Conservative.

[*The Legacy of the Second World War*, John Lukacs, Yale University Press, 208 pages]

World War Without End

By John Willson

JOHN LUKACS SAYS in the introduction to his remarkable book *A Thread of Years*, referring to a friend of a friend, “he writes, not for a living, not for reputation, but because he can’t help it.” Lukacs responds in his own voice, “Not quite—but I can’t help writing this.”

He’s chosen an interesting title for his latest book, *The Legacy of the Second World War*, implying, as in his *Confessions of an Original Sinner* and *Last Rites*, that there is something to hand on to the next generation. “Legacy” is from the Latin *legare*, “to bequeath,” and although Lukacs’s title says that it is the Good War doing the bequeathing, he is too.

Reading a book by John Lukacs is always an adventure. On the one hand, he assumes that you have read all the others; on the other hand, he repeats the substance of the others so that you won’t forget and adds something sufficiently provocative to draw you to the next one—or perhaps to cause you to throw this one against the wall a few times. We see here familiar Lukacs themes: nationalism, not ideology, was the major force driving countries and conflicts in the 20th century; the two great wars were triangular contests, especially the second, a “gigantic global struggle” between Western parliamentary democracy, Communism, and National Socialism; the great leaders directing the struggles, Churchill and Roosevelt, Hitler and Stalin, are best understood as nationalist statesmen (with Churchill being the greatest and Hitler the most extraordinary); an emphasis on the will and character of Great Men (“during the Second World War a few men ... governed the history of the world”); and the elusive, if

seductive, idea of national character.

Stephen Tonsor said in response, “Sometimes the argument verges on the clever but absurd. To call Hitler a ‘statesman’ is akin to calling Genghis Khan a statesman and comparing him to Augustus or Charlemagne.” Most of the widely respected historians of World War II—I think here of the great Gerhard Weinberg—have come to their conclusions about the ideologue Hitler based upon extensive archival research, of which Lukacs is generally contemptuous (the converse of the utter contempt that Weinberg has for non-archival historians). How we approach the study and understanding of history is at the heart of John Lukacs’s legacy and should be the main subject of any discussion of his books.

The legacy of World War II on one level is straightforward. World War I begat World War II, which begat the Cold War. World War II completed the destruction of old-fashioned colonial empires. Eventually, the Western parliamentary democracies won, although not unambiguously.

World War II (and now we get more Lukacsian) more or less completed the end of the long Modern Age. Lee Congdon, writing a wonderful appreciation of Lukacs’s work, says that his “love for the civilization that evolved during the some 500 years of the Modern, European, Bourgeois Age is manifest in all of his work,” along with his “conviction that bourgeois civilization was dedicated to the cultivation of the interior life, one distinguished by a sense of privacy, a love of disciplined liberty, a recognition that truth is more important than justice, and a bias in favor of permanent possessions and residence.” If World War II brought this age to an end, it follows that it also revived “barbarism.” Paul Johnson argues that the almost universal acceptance of relativism was responsible for what Lukacs calls barbarism, but under either name the war introduced a new age of horror, the morally problematic postwar “trials” to the contrary notwithstanding.

Lukacs’s assertions about some aspects of the war—and John Lukacs is

not afraid to assert—have struck many observers as eccentric, and most of them appear in this volume to one extent or another. To wit: Hitler was an extreme nationalist rather than a racist (may he not have been both?); he did not want a world war; he was “the most extraordinary figure in the history of the twentieth century”; national socialism was always much more popular than communism; if a Republican (he names Hoover and Taft) had been president in 1940, Hitler would have won the war; American “obsession” with anticommunism injured its politics, perhaps permanently, and contributed to the growth of a thuggish kind of nationalist democratic populism. On this last point, Lukacs doesn’t say it, but he may well believe that the new dark age will be characterized by competing national socialisms. He really disliked Joe McCarthy, and in another place declares Whittaker Chambers “wrong, wrong, wrong!” that the great challenge to the West was the religion of communism, “Ye shall be as gods.”

His strong opinions aside, John Lukacs’s great contribution to the study of World War II, and to the study of history in general, is the central insight of his greatest book, *Historical Consciousness*. I’m paraphrasing here, but he says that if one has a proper understanding of human nature, one does not need a philosophy of history. He rejects all forms of determinism, and thus all forms of ideology. “History and the novel have certain things in common,” he writes in *A Thread of Years*. “History has not yet had its Dante or its Shakespeare. That will come one day,” though not perhaps from Lukacs’s pen.

He does not bow down to the standards of the American Historical Association, and he has never tried to clone himself through graduate-student sycophants; in an important sense he is anti-professional. He admires the great Dutch historian Johan Huizinga and the now almost forgotten Carlton J.H. Hayes, who pioneered the study of nationalism and sold more books than any other historian of the 20th century.

Just as Hayes could borrow from the social sciences for insights into the psychology of nationalism and *A Generation of Materialism* because his Catholic faith kept him grounded in reality, so Lukacs can take science seriously. (He is one of the very few historians who understands quantum physics.) What makes Lukacs an “original sinner” also makes him an original historian who knows that more often than not, the imagination trumps the archives. And behind his historical consciousness lies a teacher, a real teacher of undergraduates. So for many reasons, we must take his assertions seriously.

The analysis that will most interest readers of this book is in the last chapter, “The Second World War and the Origins of the Cold War.” He hopes that “at least some of his readers will share his sense of indignation about the ideological—that is, Communism-obsessed—explanation of the cold war and even of the Second World War [note what is capitalized and what is not]. For those who think and say and write that the history of the twentieth century was governed by the epic struggle of Democracy (or Freedom) against Communism imply that the Second World War was but a secondary chapter. ... But the opposite is true.” The century, he says, was defined by the two world wars: “The Russian Revolutions of 1917 were a consequence of the First World War, the cold war of the Second.”

Thus the question: was the Cold War avoidable? Lukacs believes that if everyone had properly understood each other, it probably was, at least by the time Stalin died in 1953. I can’t help thinking of Paul Newman’s line in “Cool Hand Luke,” just before they blew his head off: “What we got here is a failure to communicate.” Lukacs thinks that there is enough evidence that Stalin was a nationalist statesman, that he and FDR respected each other, that there was “a discrepancy between Russia’s foreign policy and its internal regime,” and that Churchill was such a hardheaded realist, that if cooler American heads had prevailed the Cold War could have warmed

a significant amount by about 1956. He has no illusions about Stalin’s behavior in Eastern Europe, nor about the brutality of the Soviet regime. He simply believes that Soviet domestic and foreign policy could have operated in direct contradiction to each other, an assertion that I have not found to be true in most of human history. Foreign policy always reflects domestic policy.

Curiously, Lukacs would probably agree with that dictum in the case of the United States. “Wilson Is Overtaking Lenin” is an old theme of his, meaning that democratic progressivism in American foreign policy has dragged us into endless adventures that are more ideological than prudent (although he does not think that World War II was one of them). That this country has been in shooting wars almost 70 percent of my three-score years and ten and in very dangerous, confrontational Cold War the other 30 percent seems to give Lukacs’s point some weight. Quite a record for a peace-loving democracy, even as compared with the evil empire. Lukacs’s own anticommunism, which predated much of America’s “popular obsession with the evils of Communism,” was where he originally connected with the keen analysis of Soviet behavior voiced by George Kennan. They both thought that the United States reacted too late and too ideologically and too militarily to what was a problem much more nuanced than our post-World War II leaders understood.

On this last point it is hard to disagree with Lukacs (and Kennan). NSC-68 and all its revisions and additions up until the present day, while producing policies that have been mostly popular (even Vietnam was a popular war for most of the years we were there), are shallow ideological documents that contradict the realities of human nature about which Lukacs is so good at reminding us. Relations among nations, after all, are not much different from how we deal with our next-door neighbors. Lukacs is at his best when forcing us, his readers, to make distinctions and to read into our historical conscious-

ness something other than our favorite prejudices. On the other hand, is it incompatible with the record or the imagination to believe that both Whitaker Chambers and George Kennan could be right? That communism was the great spiritual challenge of the 20th century, and that we should have dealt with it without necessarily confusing it with the Soviet Union?

He thinks that America is turning West and South again, away from Europe. World War II brought Europe and the U.S. back together, but the end of the age, Lukacs thinks, might separate us again. Not a bad idea, if we don’t go South and West with the same crusading spirit that we have recently gone (Middle) East. ■

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[*Pops: A Life of Louis Armstrong*, Terry Teachout, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 475 pages]

King Louis and All That Jazz

By Scott Galupo

THE EXISTENCE OF MOZART was, to Saul Bellow, an affront to philosophical materialism. “At the heart of my confession, therefore, is the hunch that with beings such as Mozart we are forced to speculate about transcendence, and this makes us very uncomfortable,” Bellow wrote, “since ideas of transcendence are associated with crankiness or fadism—even downright instability and mental feebleness.”

In his new biography *Pops: A Life of Louis Armstrong*, Terry Teachout evinces no such discomfort when he declares, more pithily, that his subject “was not just a man but a miracle.”

Such high praise is common to any discussion of jazz’s pioneering—really, its first—improvisational soloist. Murray Horwitz, co-author of the book to the musical *Ain’t Misbehavin’*, called the cadenza with which Armstrong opens 1928’s “West End Blues” “maybe the most important 15 seconds in all of American music.” Clive James—perhaps the only living English-language critic who surpasses Teachout in his ability to write authoritatively across the humanities—credits Armstrong with “having done ... as much as anyone since Lincoln to change the history of the United States.”

So here we have nothing less than a history-altering, miraculous life that began in a Big Easy vice district and saw explosive changes in art and American society as a whole. All that’s missing is a memorial and education center on the National Mall.

But then, if you take the consensus of

jazz scholarship at its word, Armstrong’s was a life that, academically speaking, needn’t have continued much past 1928, the terminus of his Chicago period and his seminal work with the Hot Five and Hot Seven bands. World renown and hit records may have followed—indeed stretching into the rock era with 1964’s smash “Hello, Dolly!”—but the meteoric innovation fizzled with the rise of swing and its commercial big bands.

Teachout’s rebuttal is hidden in plain view, right there in that one-word jab of a title—*Pops*. (Armstrong informally referred to every guy as “Pops” and so earned the nickname himself. The gaping mouth inspired others like “Dipper” and “Satchmo”—the latter, Teachout surmises, originally a British-inflected abbreviation of “Satchelmouth.”)

By implication, Teachout asks the word to bear more weight. He writes, “For jazz to reach its fullest expressive potential, as well as a truly popular audience, it would first need to find embodiment not in a composer, however gifted, but in a soloist of genius with a personality to match, a charismatic individual capable of meeting the untutored listener halfway.”

Armstrong, in a word, made jazz popular.

And he did so, Teachout maintains, by dint of the broadly appealing persona for which his admirer-detractors gave him grief. “[I]t was in 1936, not before, that he began turning up in the mainstream press on a more or less regular basis, and it was his films and radio appearances, not his public performances, that put him there.” Teachout calls Armstrong “a middlebrow”—and does so with his nose pointed straight ahead.

With an absurdly foreshortened frame of historical reference, the Rev. Al Sharpton said in the wake of that other King of Pop’s death, “Michael Jackson made culture accept a person of color, way before Tiger Woods, way before Oprah Winfrey, way before Barack Obama. Michael did with music what they later did in sports, and in politics, and in television.”

Come again?

Decades before *Thriller*, Louis Armstrong was co-starring and crooning with Bing Crosby and, in 1949, made the cover of *Time*, a recognition that, Teachout hastens to remind the reader, “carried far more weight in the forties than it does today.”

Yet by the Eisenhower years, the black intelligentsia, even fellow jazzers, were openly scorning Armstrong. A character in James Baldwin’s short story “Sonny’s Blues” refers to Armstrong’s music as “old-time, down home crap.” Dizzy Gillespie called him a “plantation character.” Coleman Hawkins lamented that he was “playing just like he did when he was 20 years old; he isn’t going any place musically.” Billie Holiday stuck up for him—with the backside of her hand: “God bless Louis Armstrong! He Toms from the heart.”

The widemouthed grin, the handkerchief, the mugging, and all the other elements of his antic onstage presence—these had become all but unbearable to the wisecracking likes of Miles Davis, who while admiring the musical accomplishments of his forebears nonetheless derided both Armstrong and Gillespie for “acting the clown.” But Teachout notes that Davis could safely lob such grenades from a position of relative comfort; Armstrong and his generation had done jazz’s heavy lifting, turning mongrel street music into respectable art.

Pops is no populist apologia, however. Teachout doesn’t wholly defend the scattershot mid-period—there was the big band, Broadway, even a one-off recording with country singer Jimmie Rodgers (“Blue Yodel #9”)—so much as notice how Armstrong’s trumpet unfailingly shone through its often mediocre surroundings.

At times, Teachout is given to a rather importunate sort of pleading. For instance, “No matter what he was given to record, he gave his best in return, and his alchemic ability to turn dross into gold was undiminished.” And “These pop sides are not to be sneered at—not

all of them, anyway.” Of Armstrong’s decidedly “checkered” (the author’s word) film career, Teachout’s prose turns blushing red: “[H]e was a natural actor whose lively facial expressions were a cameraman’s dream. He had the purest, most potent kind of star quality: no sooner did he walk into a shot than the eyes of the audience went straight to him and stayed there.”

Teachout would have been justified in coming straight to the point: a nonstop career that spanned more than a half-century was bound to find itself on autopilot from time to time. Armstrong did not have the luxury of working in an industry where rock bands like U2 can spend years crafting an *objet d’art* otherwise known as a long-player.

Teachout’s adulatory mood is strained most by Armstrong’s dismissal of bebop, which emerged from the ashes of swing in the years following World War II. Had the innovator turned reactionary? He seemed “to go out of his way to look for chances to attack the boppers.” Teachout speculates that Armstrong resented their haughty anti-showmanship.

More than that, bebop must have violated a cardinal virtue instilled in Armstrong by his New Orleans mentor Joe “King” Oliver: “play the lead so people can know what you’re doing.”

Horn players like Armstrong, unlike pianists or guitarists, can’t avail themselves of chord voicings, and so they pride themselves on their ability to “spell out the changes” through artfully-chosen single notes.

Boppers such as Hawkins, Charlie Parker, and Thelonious Monk did not feel compelled to obey such ear-pleasing, smoothly-resolving conventions as the diatonic scale; where they heard “altered tones,” as today’s jazz phraseology has it, Armstrong heard “notes that don’t mean nothin’.”

Teachout is forced to conclude, somewhat ruefully, “Armstrong chose to offer his listeners music that they could enjoy without exertion.”

Armstrong may have been a miracle—but he was, at all times, also a man.

The life, salted as it was with guns, gangsters, and “gags”—Armstrong’s favorite slang term for pot—not to mention nearly a handful of wives, has been told before, but Teachout tells it with verve and a careful eye. Recollections by peers and collaborators are checked and cross-checked. Teachout listened to hours of personal spoken recordings and found Armstrong to be a more introspective soul than he ever let on to his public.

In his provocative 2007 book *A Bound Man: Why We Are Excited About Obama and Why He Can’t Win*, author Shelby Steele contrasted Armstrong’s model of “bargaining” with whites with Miles Davis’s equally fabricated pose of “challenging” them. In Steele’s estimation, Armstrong’s bargain “required him to be cheerful and less than fully

BEBOP MUST HAVE VIOLATED A CARDINAL VIRTUE INSTILLED IN ARMSTRONG BY HIS NEW ORLEANS MENTOR JOE “KING” OLIVER: “PLAY THE LEAD SO PEOPLE CAN KNOW WHAT YOU’RE DOING.”

human.” (Obama’s “bargain,” meanwhile, requires that a black man be liberal.)

While Teachout contends that the “broad smile was no mere game face ... it told the truth about the man who wore it,” in another way he confirms Steele’s view when he notes that “forty years of success had failed to make [Armstrong] confident of his ability to maneuver in the world of music without the help of a white manager ...”

Armstrong, who of course endured hideous discrimination throughout his career, dating all the way back to the segregated Mississippi riverboats on which he performed in 1919, derived dignity not through political engagement but, rather, through an ethic of self-help and intense activity that, Teachout writes, made him critical of fellow blacks who succumbed to self-destruction. Accommodation—which meant playing to segregated audiences as a matter of course, even during his later,

victory-lap years with the All Stars band—was the only option open to him; success in the white world was its own justification.

But one never gets the sense from *Pops* that Louis Armstrong could have ended up, like James Brown, a Nixon man. (Come to think of it, Armstrong died in 1971—we know he didn’t end up a Nixon man.) Armstrong’s private feelings about race boiled over into the public for the first and last time in 1957, when, in an interview with a journalism student, he blasted President Dwight Eisenhower (“two-faced,” “no guts”) for failing to confront Arkansas Gov. Orval Faubus over the infamous “Little Rock Nine,” in which an angry mob of segregationists denied a group of black students entry into a Little Rock high school.

Teachout helpfully recalls that, in Armstrong’s day, Americans were not used to hearing celebrities pop off about current affairs. But the public forgave Armstrong: “It was a crystal-clear sign of how white audiences had come to feel about him: they had been welcoming Satchmo into their homes via TV for the better part of a decade and in so doing had come to love him. That love may well have been his foremost contribution to the cause of racial justice, a contribution that no other black man in America, not even Martin Luther King, was capable of making in 1957.”

Yet he never marched. Of his decision not to take part in civil-rights demonstrations, Armstrong told the *New York Times* in 1965: “My life is music.” That was the only identity to which the man was bound. ■

Scott Galupo is a writer and musician living in Virginia.

[*Reappraising the Right: The Past and Future of American Conservatism*, George H. Nash, ISI Books, 450 pages]

Consensus Historian

By Paul Gottfried

GEORGE H. NASH'S *Conservative Intellectual Movement in America Since 1945*, in either its original (1976) or later expanded edition (1996), would have assured him an honored place as a scholar, even if he had never embarked on his exhaustive three-volume biography of Herbert Hoover. His new anthology treats in further detail a movement that Nash has been analyzing since his graduate school days at Harvard in the early 1970s. Even for those who are familiar with his subject, there is much in these essays that is new and insightful.

The section "Jews and the Conservative Community" would make the book worth buying even if there were nothing else to recommend it. Nash presents a spirited group of Jewish financiers and publicists who became known to their friends and enemies alike as "Jews for Joe McCarthy." Spearheaded by Benjamin Schultz, a Reform rabbi from Yonkers, this controversial group got its start as the American Jewish League Against Communism in February 1948. Over the next several years, it came to boast among its writers and sponsors George Sokolsky, Roy Cohn, Bernard Baruch, Lawrence Fertig, Alfred Kohlberg, Frank Chodorov, Maj. Gen. Julius Klein, Eugene Lyons, Morrie Ryskind, Marvin Liebman, and Ralph de Toledano.

In its early days, the League received financial backing from the social-democratic United Garment Workers union as well as from Jewish conservatives. Until the early 1950s, moreover, it could have fit snugly into the Cold War liberal camp as well as the postwar Old Right. It

emerged after Schultz attacked his own teacher, the renowned Reform rabbi Stephen S. Wise, for his far-left politics, including his harangues at postwar Communist-front rallies. To Schultz's consternation, Wise had gone after Winston Churchill's 1946 "Iron Curtain" speech, which warned against the aggressive designs of the Soviet empire. Wise railed against Churchill's unfavorable view of Stalin's ambitions as "one of the most mischievous and hurtful utterances ever made by a person of authority and responsibility." Given Wise's reputation as a towering figure in interfaith cooperation and Zionist politics, his former student was about to encounter a tornado.

Schultz scolded Wise in, among many other places, the *World Telegram* newspaper, and in the subsequent heat of battle, he predictably lost his pulpit in a predominantly leftist congregation. It was obvious that a career change was in order. Schultz devoted himself thereafter to anti-Communist activism, including the chairmanship of an interfaith anti-Communist league. His overly close identification with Sen. Joe McCarthy, even after McCarthy had assailed the U.S. military for its alleged openness to Communist infiltration, caused Schultz to fall into widespread disfavor. He ended his bumpy life as the head of a small congregation in a tiny town in Mississippi. Schultz's conservative views, one might imagine, impressed his Christian neighbors far more than they did his puzzled, left-of-center congregants.

By the mid-'50s, Schultz's League had worn itself out in contention with liberal Jewish organizations like the American Jewish Committee, but in its heyday, it was a striking anomaly. While most American Jews, then and now, stood politically left of center, particularly after the Right had been repeatedly identified with Nazis and Nazi sympathizers, the League, by contrast, moved generally in the direction of Schultz's close friend Senator McCarthy. And the group that went after it most doggedly, the American Jewish Committee, was

clearly the precursor and early sponsor of today's neoconservatives. Indeed, the Committee financed and oversaw *Commentary* magazine, and its members advocated the same patchwork of positions represented by the magazine and later neoconservatives: fervent Zionist sympathy, pro-welfare-state but non-socialist policies, and an emphatically anti-Soviet approach to international relations.

The League did not really exhibit the features of later paleoconservatives, but the group did remain on the Right. Its most famous authors went to work for *National Review*; there they were joined by other Jewish "forgotten godfathers," whom Nash discusses in a separate chapter. The focus of their activism was the crusade against Communism, not any domestic social agenda. The Jewish anti-Communists whom Nash analyzes were living before the radical social change that big government and the media advanced in succeeding decades. Separating Truman Democrats and Taft Republicans in the early 1950s was not a war over gay marriage and abortion on demand but disagreement about federal redistributionist programs and resistance to the Communist challenge at home and abroad.

Nash's discussion of Jewish anti-Communists reveals an interesting fact: for Jews, as well as Catholics, who embraced postwar conservatism, anti-Communism became a transformative cause. Its participants went from being hyphenated Americans to patriotic heroes. For the first time, they stood above and often against Anglo-Saxon bluebloods as the vindicators of the American cause. This generalization applies to Nash's (mostly Eastern European) Jewish McCarthyites as well as the Irish-German Catholic from Appleton, Wisconsin whom they vigorously defended.

Although no other part of the anthology is quite as engrossing as the one on the League and Jewish McCarthyites, most of *Reappraising the Right* includes valuable insights. Whether talking about conservative think tanks, the

influence of the Southern Agrarian Richard Weaver, the ambivalences of Whittaker Chambers, William F. Buckley Jr.'s writing habits, or the career of Herbert Hoover, Nash is usually enlightening, even for those of us who have written books on the same general theme. He remains informative even while offering obligatory, formal tributes to onetime conservative personages such as E. Victor Milione and Ernst van den Haag.

It is therefore a pity that he provides so little of substance when it comes to rifts in the present conservative movement. His chapter on the "uneasy future of conservatism" does not indicate any reason for concern about a movement that Nash intermittently suggests is visibly divided. His advice here and in the succeeding chapter is that we should go back to "Ronald Reagan's legacy," although it is not clear that this legacy coincides with what conservatives historically believed. Reagan's presidency might even have marked the beginnings of "conservative wars," which significantly broke out in the 1980s. But then, it does not seem that Nash sees real infighting on the Right, save that not all self-described conservatives like the Religious Right. He may also attach too much world-historical importance to the fact that John Derbyshire (in *The American Conservative*) ridiculed the speaking style of Rush Limbaugh. That is hardly the main line of division on the Right.

Moreover, there seems to be a noticeable disconnect between the second edition of Nash's magnum opus on the conservative movement, which came out 14 years ago, and the relatively harmless fissures he locates in the present house of conservatism. In 1996, Nash referred to the "serious source of discontent" aroused by neoconservatives and the battles this produced. Today, there is supposedly a productive dialogue among conservative factions, the neo-conservatives being only one among many. This, of course, is not how the real world works. Since the mid-1990s, thanks to their superior media

resources and connections, the neocons have clobbered the Old Right; Nash as a scholar should at least report on this fateful defeat. Alas, he does not. The losing side is pushed down a memory hole. Perhaps this is because these wars never get mentioned on Fox News or at meetings of the neoconservative-controlled Philadelphia Society, a group of which Nash was recently president.

In his introduction, Nash tells us that given the superabundance of self-identified conservatives in the media and think tanks, our world is "a much less lonely place for conservatives than it had been in 1953, when a young don from Michigan, Russell Kirk, brought forth a book he originally intended to call *The Conservative Rout*." Such a judgment is comparable to stating that Elizabeth I would have gladly changed places with Elizabeth II, seeing that today's figurehead monarchy is less endangered than the Tudor monarchy had been in the 1560s. It may be worth repeating the obvious here: America in the 1950s was infinitely more conservative on social matters. A social conservative now is someone who affirms positions that just about everyone, including members of the Communist Party, held in the 1950s. Why would Kirk, who celebrated Edmund Burke's antirevolutionary England of the 1790s, feel more at home in today's America?

Nash makes these errors as someone who has only limited, highly partisan contact with the current conservative movement. His published comments on the contemporary scene are often celebrations and tributes. This may be the kind of writing that comes from someone who is no longer a close, critical observer, but rather a trustworthy economist unlikely to cause embarrassment to those in power. Nash the man might live in the present, but Nash the scholar of conservative history would be well advised to keep away from it. ■

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Conservatism

Continued from page 18

economic arena the need for constant forms of "creative destruction," wealth-generation, and innovation. Several centuries ago, thinkers like Montesquieu and Tocqueville observed that modern politics was an effort to orient people's vision away from the worship of the divine—and away from the attendant theological disputes that resulted—toward the pursuit of material prosperity. They also noted that the pursuit for temporal bounty could know no limits and that as an end, materialism would induce constant dissatisfaction with our current circumstance, whatever that may be. Today's conservatives are prone to embrace this particularly modern political agenda of promoting "restlessness," a condition that rejects the "given" in favor of the prospect of "transformation." Historically, conservatives have instead counseled moderation, frugality, and limits.

There is exceedingly little that conservatism now seeks to conserve. If it would recover, it must begin by acknowledging its own heresies and drift. Such a reconsideration must be based upon a probing examination of what conservatism stands for, not as it is defined against an opposition that succeeds whenever it can set the terms of the debate. Conservatism can be conservative again, but that will require a different turn to radicalism—a return to roots—in order to overcome the ideology the non-ideological temperament has itself become. ■

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Visit to a Small Planet

FOUR SCORE AND ZERO years ago in Flagstaff, Arizona, Clyde Tombaugh, a bespectacled 24-year-old just off the farm from Burdett, Kansas, joined an exclusive fraternity of merit from which he has been posthumously booted. Clyde found a planet—which those costive bastards of the International Astronomical Union now say isn't a planet!

Our family rambled into Flagstaff a few years back, bunking in the downtown Hotel Monte Vista, a splendidly faded and haunted monument. We slept in the Clark Gable room, though Clark seems among the least likely Hollywood haints. (I wouldn't stay in a Sal Mineo room for nothin'!)

Flagstaff is also home to the Lowell Observatory, founded in 1894 by the Boston Brahmin Percival Lowell, who was convinced that he had seen with his own eyes Martian-made canals on the Red Planet.

Lowell was a rich man with a magnificent obsession and the integrity to pay for it himself rather than milk the taxpayers. If his astronomers never did find life on Mars, one found something even less expected—Pluto.

In contrast to the computerized robotism of astronomy today, everything about Pluto's discovery was fallible, painstaking, whimsical—human.

Discoverer Tombaugh was a classic American boy who spent his Kansas days in the wheatfields and his nights at the eyepiece of his homemade telescope. On cloudy evenings, he taught himself Greek and Latin; on Sunday afternoons, his pasture hosted the neighborhood touch-football game.

College was out of the question. So was a "career," until in one of those message-in-a-bottle tosses characteristic of bright and naïve provincial lads, Clyde

sent his freehand drawings of Mars and Jupiter to the Lowell Observatory.

His timing was perfect. Observatory director Vesto Slipher was looking for a talented amateur to work long hours at low pay searching for the "Planet X" hypothesized by Percival Lowell. Vesto decided to give the kid a shot. So in January 1929, Muron Tombaugh drove his son Clyde to the train station at Larned, Kansas, whence the youth departed for Flagstaff with Dad's parting words ringing in his ears: "Clyde, make yourself useful, and beware of easy women."

In his history of Great-Uncle Percy's colony of the starstruck, *The Explorers of Mars Hill* (1994), William Lowell Putnam writes that Slipher desired not a theoretician but a plodder for the "boring and tedious" planet search. Using a "blink comparator" microscope, Tombaugh spent up to nine hours a day comparing photographic plates of identical patches of sky taken at intervals of several days.

At about 4 p.m. on Feb. 18, 1930, "I saw a little image popping in and out," Clyde told his biographer David Levy, himself a romantic comet-chasing poet of the Arizona sky. Clyde walked down the hall and into the director's office. "Dr. Slipher," he said, "I have found your Planet X."

The obscure Kansan, his era's version of an industrious office intern, had become the third person in recorded history to find a planet.

He became famous, in a "yes, but" way. In William Lowell Putnam's phrase, Clyde was Pluto's "fortuitous discoverer, the photographic technician Tombaugh."

Ouch! Bring me my tea, boy, and step lively!

Pluto—it's a good name, isn't it? Sure,

it's no Uranus, that gift to generations of snickering schoolboys, but it evokes the underworld and honors with its first two letters Percival Lowell, whose batty and litigious widow asked Clyde, "Are you willing to have the planet named Constance?" (He was not, though Mrs. Lowell shared Pluto's iciness and highly irregular orbit.)

You might regard Tombaugh's story as a parable of the diligent clerk, the persevering drone, but there was an ardor in his arduousness. Bearing only a diploma from good old Burdett High—"Let each sheep wear his own skin," said Thoreau of such honors—Clyde seized the chance he was given by the outliers at Lowell, which was "virtually an outcast in professional astronomical circles," as Tombaugh later wrote. (Soon thereafter, the principal of Burdett High convinced the University of Kansas to award the planet discoverer a scholarship. Talk about a distinguished freshman! Clyde eventually taught astronomy at New Mexico State in Las Cruces, becoming that city's most famous resident since Billy the Kid-killer Pat Garrett.)

Eighty years after Clyde broke the news to Vesto, Pluto is in a categorical netherworld—more out than in, alas. Those who expelled Pluto from the planet club are, in the main, credentialed astronomers employed by government-subsidized facilities in which a 21st-century Clyde Tombaugh would be wearing a hairnet and ladling mac and cheese in the cafeteria.

David Levy told me that Tombaugh, who died in 1997, was saddened in his final years by the suspicion that he and Pluto were in for a demotion. "Dwarf planet" they call it now. But maybe that's okay. Pluto, Flagstaff, Clyde Tombaugh—small really is beautiful. ■

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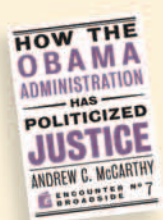


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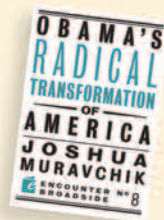


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